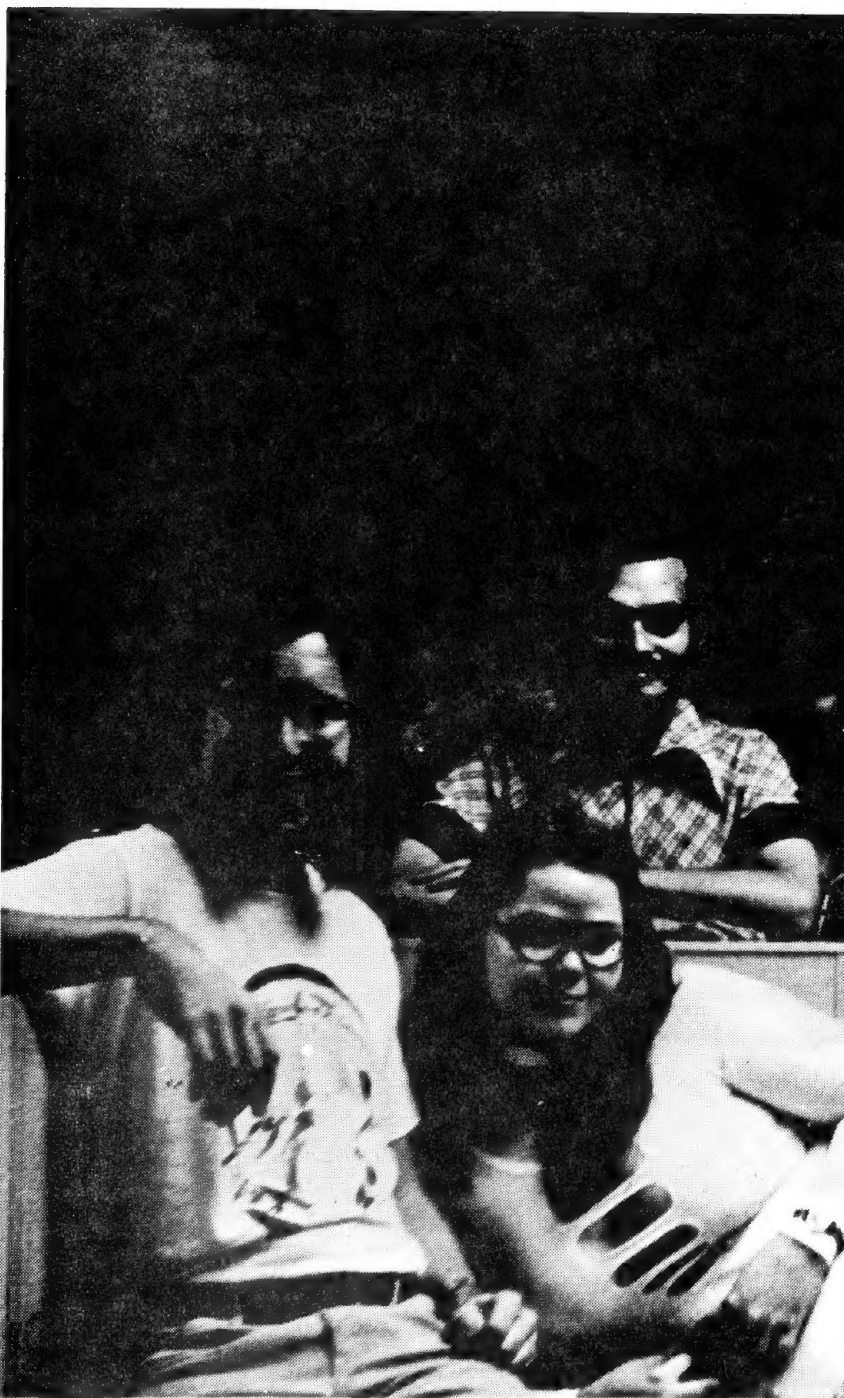




The Legion Outpost



Who are these strange people . . . and what's a Talok-1? See page 13



The Legion Outpost...

...is published quarterly (...we're doing it, friends!...) by Harry C. Broertjes, 728 Clark Street, Apt. 302, Evanston IL 60201. Issue #8, Summer, 1974.

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LEGION OUTPOST



Jim Shooter in 1967

THE JIM SHOOTER

INTERVIEW

Five years have passed since Jim Shooter ended his phenomenal career as a comic book writer. He was 18 then.

Today he still lives in the suburban Pittsburgh home where he wrote dozens of Superman family stories including, from 1966 to 1970, most of the Tales of the Legion of Super-Heroes.

In a phone conversation this May with Outpost editor Harry Broertjes, Jim discussed his years as a DC writer and what he's been doing since leaving comics.

OUTPOST: You quit writing comics when you were 18, I believe, which is younger than most of today's writers were when they started in the business. Why did you get out so soon?

SHOOTER: It's a long story. You have to remember that I was 13 when I started writing. For me it wasn't a whim or a juvenile fantasy that prompted my stab at authorship. It was the need for money, in a big way. What else can a 13-year-old do? Sell papers? I did that too, by the way.

For four years while I was in high school I earned very good money writing for National. The money went for necessities. There I was, an otherwise normal school kid, engaged in a very serious business with adults who were very serious about earning their livings. It's difficult to be 15 and be very serious about anything. It leads to neurosis. You see, adults justify their existence by earning a living. In their peer group, jobs and earning a living take on much status significance. In a high school peer group, however, things are different. Writing comic books can have peer significance, in the same way that doing macrame or climbing the flagpole does. Making money can have significance, but only to save for college, or buy a car, or waste. Earning a living is adult—it has no high school peer group significance!

So, as a typical high school kid turned writer, the money—or more precisely, earning a living—quickly lost its charm. It ceased to be an incentive. It paid bills, but it had no personal meaning. What all this adds up to is that my former neurotic, teenybopper self lived and

worked for praise. Pats on the back. Recognition. The local papers ran a couple stories on the "boy cartoonist." This Week magazine and American Youth published my picture. I loved it. This was my pay.

But Mort Weisinger didn't have a hint about that. He was a hard-nosed businessman; he paid for my work and thought that was enough. He caused a kind of pathological fear of telephones in me. Every call from New York included liberal griping from Mort—too many words per panel...over the page limit...not on time...why can't you write like you used to...how the hell can we get a cover out of this—typical editor stuff. I knew the complaining was natural, and I knew Mort just wasn't the type to hand out praise. But this didn't help; it got so I was afraid to pick up the phone.

Mort was always right—businesswise, anyway. I was invariably naive, uninformed, and often downright stupid. I'm sure that in many ways I caused him more problems than I was worth. He made it clear that he expected the same from me as he would from any writer on his staff. On the other hand, it was very hard to deal with him, the situation being what it was. As it progressed, our relationship became more and more strained; I felt more and more inadequate. I can't say it was Mort's fault. Let's call it extenuating circumstances.

At any rate, it reached its worst when I became a senior in high school. I was tired of trying; the money never seemed to be enough for my mother, the stories never seemed to be enough for Mort—and my last chance to be a kid was slipping by! I tried to do it all—write

for Mort, go to school and get good grades so I could nail down a scholarship, and have a little fun, like football games, dances, parties and stuff. But it was too much, and it all suffered. I missed 60 days of school that year, my grades fell, my work output dropped and I still missed a lot of high school life. The bright side was that I did get the scholarship, thanks to the fact that I clobbered the NMSQT. And I think I did some of my best work that year, though not nearly enough to please Mort.

Well, the scholarship was a University Scholar's appointment at N.Y.U.—\$17,000—plus an overlapping National Merit \$6,000 maximum, so I was all set to go to New York. But by this time my difficulties with Mort had reached a head. We had a telephone argument about what my working arrangements would be when I came to New York. He really wasn't prepared for that, and although the lecture I got was probably justified, I had just about had it with him. On top of the financial disaster and personal chaos of my life, I just couldn't take the harassment.

So I decided to try Marvel. I flew to New York and got Stan Lee on the phone—and that, by the way, was amazing. He had never heard of me, but he agreed to give me 15 minutes to talk to him—and getting to see him, I found out later, was an incredible feat. Anyway, talk I did, for almost two hours, and in the end he hired me. Though I couldn't swing the kind of deal I wanted—so that I could work and go to school at the same time—at least I had a job. Actually, scholarship or not, I wasn't really sure I could stand four more years of working and going to school. So I gave up the scholarship to give Marvel a try. The deal was that I got a regular salary for a 40-hour week at the office, and free lance for anything extra.

OUTPOST: Free lance for the writing...

SHOOTER: Yeah, and I was going to try some inking, coloring and what-have-you. I did some editing—art corrections, little story corrections and stuff like that. They showed me how to color and I hassled Sol Brodsky until he let me do some inking samples for him. And boy, he was a slick one; he gave me these two splash pages, one by Jack Kirby and the other by the guy who did Daredevil.

OUTPOST: Gene Colan.

SHOOTER: Yeah, Gene Colan. He [Sol] said, "Here, see what you can do with these." And I was impressed, y'know, inking Jack Kirby. I thought that was cool. Anyway, I did it and I tried to be as faithful to his style as I could—and that was my big mistake. I inked it like I thought

he wanted it, the way the pencils suggested, because Kirby does a real thick job on machines and everything else. So I took it in and then Mr. Brodsky told me that this drawing had been rejected originally, and it had been rejected because it was too cluttered and had no depth. And I had so accurately interpreted Mr. Kirby that it was still too cluttered. Brodsky then told me what I should have done; he's a good art critic. By the way, everyone else in the office loved it. And let me tell you, Marie Severin at Marvel is one of the gentlest, kindest, nicest people on Earth.

OUTPOST: The same thing happened to the Gene Colan sample?

SHOOTER: It came out all right, but it wasn't anything special. Anyway, Brodsky really showed me how an illustration should be done. And then he started showing me all the art that people from all over were sending him. Some

Then one day Stan told me, 'Okay, write something.'

of it was fantastic, but I thought mine was pretty good, too. At least some people—like Gil Kane—thought so.

OUTPOST: When did you do anything that Gil Kane drew?

SHOOTER: All I remember is that he did something I wrote and he wrote he a little letter saying it was nice.

OUTPOST: Captain Action #2, maybe?

SHOOTER: Right, that was it. Anyway, I only worked at Marvel for about two weeks, wading through a mountain of books. They had collections of their own books, but they weren't complete. I'd read a series with a few issues missing, and I couldn't keep up with the continuity. And then one day Stan told me, "Okay, write something." Well, I was involved in all kinds of story conferences and stuff, contributing ideas on a bunch of books, but he wanted to see something of my own. So I wrote him a whole bunch of story synopses. And at the same time I was trying to find a place to live, at least temporarily. I was staying with one of the guys from Marvel then, and I was broke. I want to tell you, it's expensive to live in New York City.

OUTPOST: Yeah, I've heard.

SHOOTER: So again, things just weren't working out. I tried to see Stan, but he wasn't there half the time, since he only came in on certain days; the other half of the time he had something else to do. So I gave up and came back to Pittsburgh, to see what kind of trouble I could get in here.

OUTPOST: So what happened when you got back?

SHOOTER: Well, the job market in Pittsburgh for 18-year-old comic book writers is pretty sad, I want to tell you. First I wanted to try to get into some advertising, and that's pretty difficult.

OUTPOST: Was this writing ad copy or doing art?

SHOOTER: Well, anything involved with it; I wasn't too particular. I got good interviews but nobody wanted to risk hiring me, a kid just out of high school. And my background wasn't exactly something I could sell. So some places gave me some free lance assignments. I did a billboard for Pittsburgh Outdoor Advertising; I did various little jobs, signs and whatever, but I eventually had to get a normal job. So I figured, okay, what I'll do is just earn a living until I decide whether I want to go to school. I did that for a couple of years, working free lance on the side when I could. The latest



thing I got to do...well, one of the advertising agencies I was interested in called me up; they wanted me to do a cartoon series for U.S. Steel, which I did. It was very successful. I've done several other things for them, too. I'm working fairly steadily now as a free lance writer-designer, brain-for-hire for an ad agency here. So anyway, my name is coming up in advertising circles in Pittsburgh and possibly I'll get a job in that direction, which beats managing a chicken store.

OUTPOST: Which beats what?

SHOOTER: I managed a Kentucky Fried Chicken store for about a year. I quit when I decided to go back to school. I don't think I'm really sure what I want to do.

OUTPOST: Have you ever considered going back into comics again? Especially since Mort has left DC?

SHOOTER: Yeah, sometimes. I mean I really feel like I'd like to go out and just see Mort, now that I'm not working for him any more. There'd be no hassle. I really like him, and I'd like to straighten things out. Actually, he was very generous in a lot of ways. For instance, after I was writing for him for a couple of months, he called me up and he said, "I want you to come to New York." He said he'd pay my plane fare, my hotel, the whole thing. That was a thrill. I was only 14 then. So my mother and I went. We visited his house and he took us to see "Superman" on Broadway. I mean, it was fantastic. A 14-year-old's dream come true. So I don't feel bad about everything. I've been in New York City several times since and every time I've been there I've thought I should go up to Third Avenue and drop in on people.

OUTPOST: Well, they aren't even there any more; they're at Rockefeller Plaza now.

SHOOTER: Oh are they? They'd just moved to Third Avenue...

OUTPOST: Yeah, they keep switching around pretty quick; they made the move last summer.

SHOOTER: Well anyway, I kept thinking I ought to go see Nelson Bridwell, but I don't really know if I'd identify with any of the people there any more.

OUTPOST: Did you ever do any work with Nelson while you were writing at DC?

SHOOTER: Only when Mort for some reason wasn't there. Nelson would occasionally send me a letter and tell me to do something and I'd do it. Working with Nelson was pretty good. He was so tactful. Like, when he'd talk to you about something, he made you feel like you were right all along even though you were doing it his way. Y'know? And then when I'd do a story and he'd send me a letter with the check, he'd have a nice little paragraph or two telling me how well I handled it. I was impressed. I could work for Nelson again. I mean, I guess we had a lot of other differences, but he was so easy to talk to and work with. Same with Carmine [Infantino]. It was a good deal.

Say, is Cary Bates working there full time?

OUTPOST: Yeah, well he's more or less working full time, although it's on a free lance basis. He's been trying to get into film writing, I understand. But right now he's writing the Legion, the Flash and about half of the Superman stories.

SHOOTER: The thing Mort always used to tell me about Cary Bates was he always had a good cover to go with a story. That was my problem; I was a good verbal thinker sometimes, but I couldn't get a cover, and Cary would always come up with a cover first. I understand he had some rejections, but Mort told me when he had a cover it was a good one, and he had a story to go with it. I always used to hear about Cary Bates and how he did it. I guess Cary heard about me, too.

OUTPOST: Did you ever try to do any art for DC or sound them out about the possibility?

SHOOTER: Not really. It was too hard to do Superman. I talked about it a couple of times with Mort, and he said if I were out there in New York it would be different, since he could have somebody help me out. But all he ever wanted from me was scripts and layouts. At one time I wanted to just write scripts, without layouts, but he said no. The artists liked my layouts, so I always did them.



Page of a non-existent story, drawn by Jim

OUTPOST: You mean actual layouts of the pages?

SHOOTER: Oh yeah, a comic book page with simple sketches; a little more complicated than that.

OUTPOST: That's not the policy at DC, though; it's more or less just a plain script.

SHOOTER: Right. I think I was the only person who ever did that. I mean, in the summer when I was 13, I was reading Adventure Comics and it occurred to me that somebody got paid for writing this. And I remember I was reading a particularly bad story; I thought, "I can write better than this." And so I did. I wrote a story and sent it in. It was like a comic book; I had a cover on it and all the pages drawn, like a kid would do. But this story was reasonably coherent. Mort sent me a letter which didn't really say much except, "You're a nice kid. Send me another book." So I did. I did the same thing again, the same way, written and drawn together like a comic book. The drawings were kind of amateurish, but anyway, the second time he called me up and said, "Look, I'll pay you for these and let's do some more." And he bought them both—including the first one.

OUTPOST: Was that the story that introduced Ferro Lad and the others? [Adventure #346-47]

SHOOTER: Yeah, that was the one. Actually, the first one I wrote was the Doctor Regulus story, with the big golden spaceship. [Adventure #348] Looking back, it was kind of corny, but anyway, Mort liked it.

OUTPOST: That was the one George Papp drew later on.

SHOOTER: Right. And the second one I wrote was the two-parter with Ferro Lad. And then after that, for a while I did Supergirl and some other little things. I did a whole bunch of different books. I guess Mort wanted to try me out. Later I settled on the Legion.

But like I said, I've often been in New York, and I've thought about writing again. But I don't know how I could go about it. I don't think I would want to work through the mail again; I know I don't like the work well enough to do that. But I do have a sister in Ithaca which is quite a way upstate but still in New York; it

ture things between the princess and Karate Kid; getting her parents and everybody interested in what was going on. Anyway, that didn't work out too well. I didn't particularly like that story—it got too chopped up.

OUTPOST: That was the story that everybody appeared in too, I think.

SHOOTER: That's how Mort wanted it. I liked to get just three or four or five of them, but he wanted great hordes of Legionnaires in each one—thousands of bodies. And he wanted things like...well, for instance, he wanted me to write Super-Pets stories. Which was all right, I guess, but really, my heart wasn't in it. And then, there were some good story ideas which I thought were terrific, but he didn't want them because they weren't in the Superman tradition.

OUTPOST: What kinds of stories were those?

SHOOTER: Well, I had one that I sent in that he said got dangerously close to alcoholism, and he didn't like that. It involved one of the characters in the Legion, and Mort wouldn't have anything to do with it. His idea of human interest was the secret identity type story.

OUTPOST: Well, there was "The Forbidden Fruit," a Legion story that ran in the back of *Action* #378.

SHOOTER: The drug addiction story?

OUTPOST: Right.

SHOOTER: Well, when I suggested that he fought me for a while and we argued about it—the Comics Code and everything. Mort finally told me to write it. So I wrote it and he bought it, and then they rejected it and he wouldn't

Mort wanted great hordes of Legionnaires—thousands of bodies

print it. I was mad about it for a while, but later on it was printed.

OUTPOST: That was kind of a fore-runner story in that it came out before the famous Spider-Man story that involved drugs and didn't pass the Code.

SHOOTER: Well in my case it wasn't only the Comics Code. It was the way in which I wanted to write, y'know? A little more serious. Like, somehow or another I got hold of a Batman comic around the holidays, I think, and it was a Batman Christmas story. [Batman #247] I just thought this was good, you know? I picked this up and I was all excited—I was all ready to write comic books again. It was a terrific story; the whole thing tied together—

several stories, but all involving the same criminal. And Batman was the kind of Batman that I'd always pictured, the figure lurking in the shadows. And the lines he used! The gunman had Batman and a family held at gunpoint, y'know, and he's going to kill them. And Batman says, "You'd better kill me first, because if you fire that gun and it isn't at me, I'll be on you before you fire a second shot." That stirred my blood! This was cool; this is the Batman I want to write about. This is just the way. Oh God, this is what I wanted to do with Superman, Superboy and the Legion of Super...y'know... Idiots. I wanted to do this stuff and Mort said this isn't our tradition. He said when you write that way, three college kids like it and two thousand little kiddies who buy the books could not care less, and he'd rather sell it to the two thousand kiddies. And I suppose he had a point, but it stifled my creativeness or something.

But I had fun with a couple of the stories right at the end there. I had one with Duo Damsel in the back of an *Action* book #380 where her two personalities had a little fight with each other. I enjoyed that. I didn't have a lot of room to work with, but it came out pretty much like I wanted it to.

OUTPOST: Do you know she's married now?



SHOOTER: Oh yeah?

OUTPOST: Yeah, to Bouncing Boy. And Invisible Kid died last month.

SHOOTER: Wow. They're getting radical.

OUTPOST: The artistic style of the strip has changed quite a bit, too, since you left. What did you think of the artists who drew your stories?

SHOOTER: Well, when I'd have a story and an artist that I didn't particularly like would draw it, it really seemed to affect the story. Curt Swan was pretty good. He used to take my layouts and either, A) use them, or B) improve on them. Some of the other guys really did a poor job as far as I was concerned. I like Curt Swan; the only thing I didn't like about Curt was that whenever somebody was hitting something or picking something up or doing anything, his figures didn't look like they were really trying; didn't look like they were under any strain or particular effort. But it was always so interpretive, very good. But the action scenes lost something.

For instance, I'd have Karate Kid smashing a tank or something like that. It just didn't have any impact. I'd give it four panels—I'd want this scene to really sing. I'd play it up big, but it wouldn't have any real zip to it. Curt always seemed to prefer to draw Lois Lane or something. He evidently preferred to do a single character, like Superman, instead of an army like the

Legion. He wrote me a couple of letters, gave me some interesting hints about how to do things.

OUTPOST: I remember that in your origin story for Captain Action #17 and a few of your other stories—I'm thinking especially of the Legion story in which you introduced Universo [Adventure #349]—ancient history was the backdrop for the story's plot. Are you an ancient history buff?

SHOOTER: Sure. You don't have to dig very deep into history books to get into some fantastic heroics—Thermopolae, for instance, or Sergeant York, or Gordon at Khartoum in

I tried to make the Emerald Empress as seamy as possible

the Sudan. Great stuff and fuel for any writer's imagination. I read history and comics in about equal amounts while growing up. They're often much alike—the best of both show the dark sides of their heroes as well as the bright.

OUTPOST: I don't know if I'd make such a sweeping comparison, but I see your point. What about the Fatal Five? I've been told that when you created them, you included the five different concepts of super-beings: the robot; the powerful, mindless monster; the man with the gadget; the female, and the young kid. Is this the way you actually approached the FF?

SHOOTER: I didn't know there were five concepts of super-beings. In any event, I didn't follow the alleged formula that closely; as far as I'm concerned, I invented the half-man, half-robot idea in Tharok. The way I saw it, the biggest problem with the group was that it needed an opponent for Superboy. I solved that with Validus, the big monster, so naturally the others had to be different. Of course, the group needed brains, and a woman—who I tried to make as seamy as possible. Mano and the Persuader just evolved as opponents for the princess and Karate Kid. In fact, most of my villains were created as opponents—made to suit a particular hero, rather than just to rob banks. With the Five, the thing I wanted to stress was their professionalism. They weren't meant to be patsies. One of the things I hated about Thor comics was that he was so damn superior I found myself rooting for the villains. On the other hand, in the Iron Man stories, the hero was having so much trouble just staying alive, he lost credibility as a fighter. I aimed for the happy medium—powerful heroes struggling against high odds, heroically, if you will. That was my concept. The Fatal Five were tailored to suit that idea.

At one time I wouldn't have given a nickel for DC's being able to compete in what I call the college market. But contrary to public opinion, the people who appear in DC's comics do show human characteristics—and are consistent. The heroes in Marvel comics are always coming up with convenient super-human efforts to overcome anything, no matter what precedents have been established. But you can always count on Superman to be overcome by kryptonite...

OUTPOST: Well, not any more, you can't.

SHOOTER: What do you mean?

OUTPOST: Well, you can't count on that any more because there's no more kryptonite.

SHOOTER: Mort was trying to get rid of that for so long. (laughter) "I don't want any more Supermans with that stuff in it," he'd always say. I guess they finally did it.

OUTPOST: Yeah, it happened in the first story that Julie Schwartz officially edited after Mort left. [Superman #233] Except, y'know, it kind of

FROM THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES...

DREAM GIRL

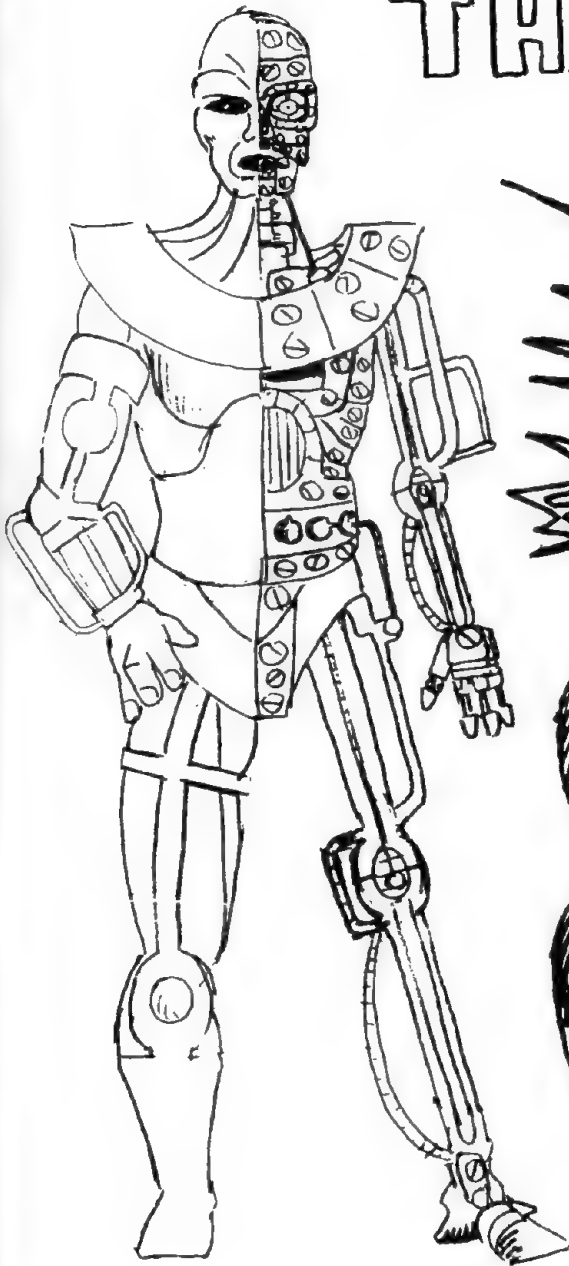
PRINCESS PROJECTRA



BRUCE PATTERSON

Right: Jim's original conception of Tharok and Validus

THAUK



VALIDUS



does something to all the future Legion stories with kryptonite in them.

SHOOTER: Shoots down all of my back issues.

OUTPOST: Yeah. Well, not really. It's just one of those things that people realize. I think they know that what's going on in the comics today is inevitably going to change and you can't do anything about past issues. Anyway, there's always some way to rationalize your way out of these problems.

SHOOTER: Do the Legion stories now have kryptonite in them?

OUTPOST: No, they don't use it any more. It hasn't been used in any stories since they destroyed it, except for a couple of Superboy stories, I think, since they can get away with it there. But they haven't used it since in any of the other books.

SHOOTER: That's really neat.

OUTPOST: But like I said, you can rationalize your way out of it. So many scientists, like Luthor and Brainiac, always managed to synthesize some kryptonite, and so you can look at it that way. Or somebody from Element Lad's race could have made it, no trouble. You can rationalize your way out of it like that, just like when Dave Cockrum took over the Legion's art and began to change a lot of the Legionnaires' costumes. The question arises, of course, well what about the adult Legion stories where they're still wearing their old costumes?

SHOOTER: (laughter)

OUTPOST: But getting back, I was going to say that Cary has brought back the Fatal Five a couple of times in the last year or so. Did you ever meet him?

SHOOTER: No, and I'd really like to. I have a mental picture of him and I'd like to see how accurate it is.

OUTPOST: Well, if you can find the latest issue of The Flash #228, it features Cary Bates in just about the starring role.

SHOOTER: Really?

OUTPOST: It was kind of like a couple of earlier Schwartz stories in which the Flash would go to a parallel dimension and discover how different things were there from good ol' Earth-1.

SHOOTER: Julie Schwartz always came up with stories like that, y'know. He asked me to send him an idea once—I guess Mort made the deal with him.

OUTPOST: An idea for what?

SHOOTER: For a story. Just to see if I could write for him. So I wrote him a story which was very acceptable, I suppose, by Mort's standards anyway. But Julie wants you to think in terms of Earth-1, Earth-2, and tricks with the mind, things like that, and he didn't like my plot. Another thing I did—I...oh well, I'd better not say that. (laughter)

Do you remember a Julie Schwartz story where Superman fought against the rest of the Justice League? The cover was terrific—all the Justice Leaguers lying around and Superman standing there, saying, "I told you who was going to win!" [JLA #63] Well, I suggested something exactly like that; the same thing to Mort, and then Julie turned up with that story. I thought that was kind of cute. But anyway, he and I never got anything together at all; I just sort of...well, when I was in New York I'd see him. I was introduced to him every time I was there; I guess neither of us remembered each other.

OUTPOST: Did you ever meet Murray Boltinoff? He's editing the Legion now.

SHOOTER: Again, I think so. I think I met just about everybody there. What usually would happen was that I'd miss my deadline—my mailing deadline—so I'd get on a plane and I'd fly it to New York personally. They had to have the story or else it would cost them air freight to ship the plates to Sparta. And then I'd go in the office in the morning and I'd hand Mort the stuff. But it was awfully hard to hang around until he looked at it, y'know. And during that period of time I'd just sort of wander around and bump into people. Carmine was great at those times because he'd always take me and introduce me and

show me around. "This is what we do here, and this is what we do here," y'know.

OUTPOST: That's interesting. But you've never really seriously considered getting back into comics?

SHOOTER: Oh, I don't know. I've come within a hair of writing a couple of scripts. I'll tell you what I'm doing right now—I'm writing a book. (laughter) I don't know what kind of a book writer I am.

OUTPOST: A novel?

SHOOTER: Yeah. I also wrote a couple of short stories, but I never did anything with them; they're just lying around somewhere, because I never felt they were good enough to pursue. When I was still working for DC I wrote a story about a spy in the future, a James Bond type, but instead of carrying an attache case with trick weapons, he had them built into his body, like a Six Million Dollar Man. This was in '67. But now they have the Six Million Dollar Man, and if I were to submit my idea to somebody now, they'd say I copied it.

But the novel itself is about a fictional young lad who amazingly enough has many of the same things happen to him as happened to me in my foolish youth. Move over, Peter DeVries! (laughter)

OUTPOST: Speaking of things happening to you, after you quit comics I heard all sorts of weird stories about you. Like once you'd supposedly gotten into the cylce scene and had gone out west to California, and you were living out there writing underground comics under a pseudonym.

SHOOTER: Well, I have a bike and I'm thinking of riding to California, but I haven't yet.

OUTPOST: And you haven't written any undergrounds.

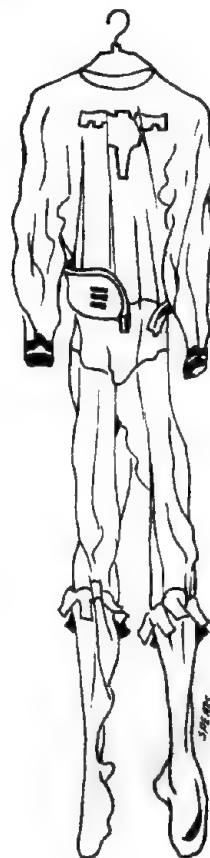
SHOOTER: No, definitely not.

OUTPOST: And another thing that I'd heard was that you'd just kind of dropped out and you were in the Village in New York now.

SHOOTER: Lies! (laughter) I'm here in Pittsburgh where I've always been.

OUTPOST: Yeah, and my phone bill will show it, too. Thanks, Jim, and good luck to you.

SHOOTER: You too, Harry.



Subject: This year's Julycon.

Evaluation: To quote a loudmouthed television personality, "BORINGGGGG!!!!!!"

Not that I have anything against Phil Seuling, or conventions, or the people that were there. I just couldn't take too much of it.

Part of the problem seems to be the convention's sheer size; Seuling estimated something like 7,000 people would be there. Estimates of the size of comic fandom in general run from 10,000 to 20,000. That's a pretty good chunk of people. Sure, I realize that more people go out to Madison Square Garden to see the Knicks, or to Shea Stadium to see the Yankees; but those are places equipped for such massive crowds.

The Commodore Hotel wasn't. And it was mobbed.

Actually, it really wasn't too bad a three days. (Maybe that was the problem—I missed two days.) Guests of honor included Joe Simon and Roy Thomas, and the cast included Will Eisner, Frank Robbins, a bunch of "Women in Comics," and more such stuff.

I think fandom's getting to me.

There was one thing I was proud of: I did not go to that convention trying to buy comics to fill the holes in my collection. The rip-off prices that some dealers charge have just about killed any hope I ever had of completing some of my series. In fact, since distribution is so awful around here, I missed *Swamp Thing* #10, which I was forced to buy at the con—for a "mere" 50¢. The issue was only a few months old, for Chrissakes!

But one of the nicer things about the con was meeting and talking with a lot of people I had never met before—and as I've said many times, fans are the nicest people in the world.

Except for the dealers.

* * *

A moment to talk about comics in general.

They are, all in all, pretty awful.

National now seems to be aiming just about all of its comics at pre-pubescent spoiled brats. A few decent strips are left—a lot of Joe Orlando's stuff, occasionally the Legion (although I'm disappointed at Gary Bates' unconscious reaction to Dave Cockrum's departure; he seems to be reverting to the Mort Weisinger/early '60s/National formula. He liked it.) And every once in a while Julie Schwartz's stuff will show why he's the greatest editor of all time.

At Marvel? They're so busy trying to make money for Cadence that they don't even keep track of what they're writing anymore. If Spider-Man ever had a motive, a direction,

whatever, he's certainly lost it. Even Conan gets repetitious. The black-and-whites? Eynuch! It's all regurgitation. Like they said in *Lampoon* a few issues ago, Just do it over! That seems to be the case at Marvel now. Stan Lee doesn't care—he's getting rich.

Maybe Frank Robbins will bring a little class to that outfit. And Irene Vartanoff. Just being around she'll shake 'em up. Roy Thomas' departure as editor may change a few things, though I doubt it right now, especially since word has it that Len Wein is replacing him on the color books, and Marv Wolfman on the b-w's.

The only thing left is Charlton. Give 'em a break.

Which brings me to the plug of the month department: The Charlton Portfolio, by CPL/Gang Publications. Simply beautiful. Two and a half bucks from Bob Layton, 4010 Mallway Drive, Apt. A, Indianapolis IN 46236. It looks at the past and present of some of the best (and worst) characters in comics history.

Also, if you have 50¢ to spare, send it to Ken Gale (547 Second Avenue, New York NY 10016) for a copy of *Green Lantern's Light*, a new mimeod publication. I haven't seen it yet, but it sounds interesting.

* * *

I think that's it, folks. I've pretty well run the gamut of stuff to write about. Next time I promise to write something interesting.

Scout's honor.

Be happy,

MF



The Poor Fan's Almanack

By HARRY BROERTJES

Bright and early the morning of August 19 I revved up my 1968 Ford Fairlane Squeakmobile and left lovely suburban Bloomington, Indiana. Immediate destination: Columbus, Ohio.

Next morning, my sleepy passenger securely belted in beside me, we headed the Squeakmobile down the road to Norristown, Pennsylvania.

And August 21, at seven yawns in the morning, three of us departed Norristown, held our breath all the way through New Jersey, paid a dollar to cross the George Washington Bridge (why anyone should have to pay to enter New York is beyond me) and ended up in a comparatively safe section of the Bronx, at 1354 Herschell Street.

And then we were five.

We, meaning myself, Jay Zilber, Mercy Van Vlack, Mike Flynn, and Rich Morrissey, who'd bused himself down from Bos-

tonland the day before. At about 11:30 a.m., Talok-1 was convened.

Talok, meaning The Annual Legion Outpost Konvention; 1, meaning it was the first of these yearly get-togethers. Tentatively, we intend to dye our skin blue and come in G-strings...but that's beside the point.

Talok was a long time in coming. The *Outpost's* been around for more than two years now, and I've known Mike Flynn for almost three. Those of you who were around when *Outpost* #1 came out in June of 1972 realize we've come a long way since then; that first slim issue (14 pages) was but a newsletter for the then-burgeoning, now-comatose Legion Fan Club. Since then our scope has broadened and our more-or-less regular staff has changed; Mike and I are the only hangers-on who've been with the *Outpost* from the start. Rich, Jay and Mercy joined in time for #2, and our "executive" relationship

has firmed up considerably since last October, when we began what's probably one of the few taped APAs in existence; which is to say, we have a boxful of cassettes circulating among us, each in turn adding his or her hour or so to a verbal collection of slander, humor, general nonsense and even some serious discussion. It's these serious deliberations that in the end determine the course the *Outpost* is now and will be taking. The decision to go wraparound this issue and adjust our subscription rates accordingly was one of the end-results. The Outhouse, last issue, for better or worse was another.

There will be another satire issue next summer, by the way; tentative title: The Really Far-Outhouse. And again for



...Mike Grell

better or worse, it won't really resemble last issue, if only because I'll be editing it...and my tastes, esthetic and otherwise, don't particularly parallel Jay's.

In any event, for all the months we five have been working so closely together, what with the tapes, frequent correspondence, almost-as-frequent phone calls, and all, we not only had never before gotten together at the same time and place, but we—except for Jay—had never even seen each other. Jay stayed over at Mike's earlier this year, and visited me in Indianapolis this summer, but I'd never seen the other three, and ditto for Mercy, Mike and Rich.

And then, as I said, we were five.

First order of business was our visit to the true-to-life amazing world of DC comics: 75 Rockefeller Plaza, 6th floor. So Mike, with the rest of us in tow, led the way into the almost-as-amazing world of New York's subways, where Mercy drew some appropriate graffiti...and some strange looks, too. Her outfit was an exact replica of Tinya Wazzo's work-suit, altered to her build, to be sure, but including all the requisite holes and non-support of the original.

I think it was a good thing she had company on the subway.

Once we were downtown, Mike—the compleat New Yorker—promptly got us lost. But eventually we made it into the outer sanctum and found ourselves under the giant golden W for you-know-what. Into the elevator; we waited as a sixth person entered, going, interestingly enough, to the sixth floor as well. I thought I recognized him from his photos, but didn't feel bold enough to ask; Mike, surely, having met him before (if it was him), would do that. But Mike, like an early-day Tarik, stood mute. Finally Rich queried, hesitantly, "Are you...Nelson Bridwell?"

He was. Rich nearly orgasmed on the spot. Immediately the two began delving into the wide-ranging esoterica of the amazing world of DC mythology, but that was cut short when we got out at the 6th floor and announced ourselves to the receptionist while Nelson toddled on to his office.

Ms. Receptionist in turn announced us to 'Mazing Murray Boltinoff, who'd long been expecting us. A few minutes' wait in the famous Green Room, and then on in. Greetings all around; Mercy presented Murray with two beautiful little figurines of Lightning Lad and Saturn Girl; a few minutes of small talk; and then Murray parked us in the office of vaca-

tioning Julie Schwartz while he went off for a meeting of minds with George Kashdan. Cary Bates came in to Julie's office to chat with us while Rich scurried off to buttonhole Nelson once again.

Mike—no longer playing Tarik—and Jay couldn't wait to start telling Cary how the Legion should be handled; I stayed out of it. My inclinations don't match M&T's, and anyway, Cary allegedly knows what I think; at least Murray says he passes all my LoCs on to Cary. (Yup, I LoC each issue of The Legion, even though you'd never know it from Murray's letters. Maybe it's because I never say Great! or Terrific! or Best Ever!!!) In any event, Murray later showed me the file in which he keeps all of his current incoming LoCs; the World's Finest and Superman Family slots had maybe 10 letters each. The Legion's slot, on the other hand, was actually two slots, both packed full, each with at least 30 or 40 letters on the latest issue. The reports are true: The Legion does draw more correspondence than any other DC feature.

Anyway, Allan Asherman soon popped his head into Julie's office, and just a bit later on we were off to see the amazing world of DC's production department. Saw Carl Gafford—he's cut his hair recently—doing some coloring corrections and a few other routine chores and we met Jack Adler...fortunately a few moments after Mercy had finished pawing through something in his office while nobody was looking. Adler's one of the friendliest people in the whole place...and he was especially friendly with Mercy.

Mercy's something of a celebrity there, we found, and not only with Adler. We wound up in Guy Lillian's office and while we gabbed about the next issue of the literary Amazing World of DC Comics—the one with the Schaffenberg cover—Lillian whipped out his check book and wrote a check to Mercy for an undisclosed amount. Something about services rendered. I think he's got worm chowder on the brain.

Eventually, Iron Mike Grell—the "Iron" being Murray's brainchild for zippier copy, Mike said—showed up. He and I talked for a while and then he passed around some stats of an upcoming Green Arrow story in which Black Canary supposedly dies (but we know better, don't we?). Mike said he plotted it himself, with Elliot S! writing the script.

Remember "scared spitless"? Well, watch for a new crypto-cuss phrase in that story: "Son of a beaver!"

Indeed.



...Guy H. Lillian III

Boltinoff and Kashdan presently emerged, as did Rich and Nelson, and we all gathered around for the group photo you saw on page 2; lighting was awful in the place, but Kashdan kindly did the best he could with my Edsel-vintage camera. Not to leave you helplessly guessing, the line-up is: front row, l-r...myself, Mercy, Mike and Jay; back row...Cary Bates, Allan Asherman, Mike Grell, Rich, Murray Boltinoff and Nelson Bridwell.

After which, Cary bopped off to take a long distance phone call from Elliot S!; Boltinoff and Kashdan returned to their deliberations; Guy Lillian trotted off to open some more mail orders for Amazing World; Grell and I resumed our discussion; Asherman and Mercy indulged in a hot discussion about something or other—which was interrupted once by friendly Jack Adler's reappearance—and Mike, Jay and Rich

listened to Nelson explain his theory that most fictional characters—and not just those in comics—live/d on Earth-1. Even most of the DC and Marvel heroes coexist on the same Earth, he said. I later joined the discussion, and even though I find Nelson's notion a little hard to take seriously, I've got to admit it poses some interesting story possibilities. For example, Nelson said it's probable that the Shadow is Jonathan Kent's brother (or cousin, I forget). Rationale: How could the Kents successfully keep the world from learning of their adopted son's fabulous abilities, unless they had some very professional outside help? Or something like that. Nelson said he's suggested the notion to Cary for possible use in a forthcoming Superman story, but said Cary wasn't too enthused with the idea.

Nelson plans eventually to publish his wide-ranging theory in a book, tentatively titled "Superman and Company."

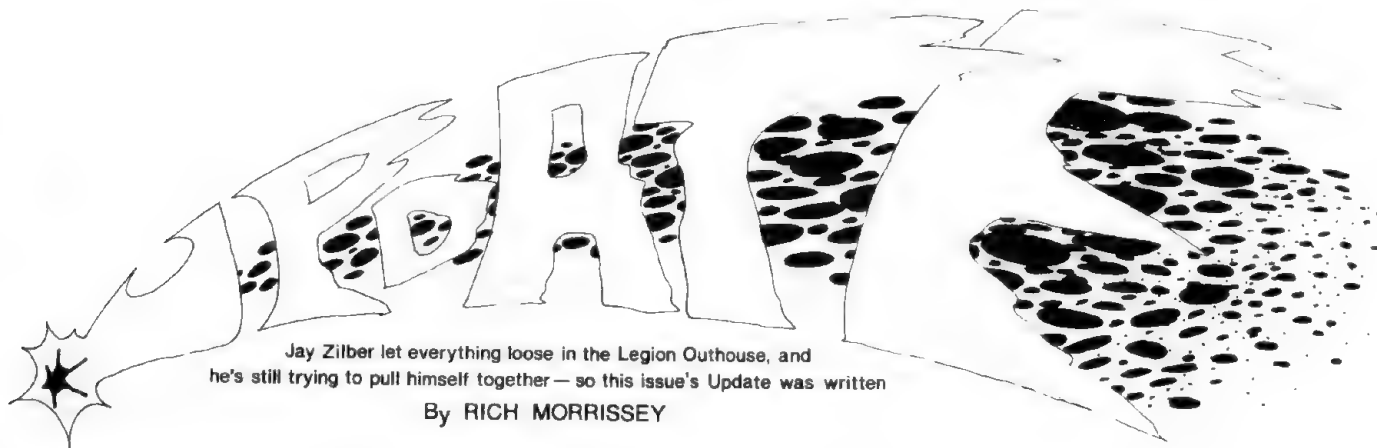
After a while we adjourned to Nelson's office, where he showed us the completed pages for the upcoming O'Neil-Schaffnerberger Capt. Marvel and Bates-Dillin JIA stories. I browsed through some preliminary printed pages (untrimmed, unstapled, uncovered) from Sparta while Rich continued to bombard Nelson with questions, opinion, suggestions and general talk-talk. After about a half-hour of this, Mike and I tore Rich away and we left the inner sanctum of the amazing world of DC comics, escorted Mercy to the train station where she just barely caught the Amtrak home, and the four of us returned to the Bronx.

Most of the rest of my four-day stay in New York was anti-climactic, the only moments of excitement—if you can call it that—coming the following day when we drove Rich to the bus station. Mike, directing me, once again got us lost and we ended up driving the Squeakmobile through Harlem and then wandering around the neighborhood of the George Washington Bridge, looking for the depot. Turned out none of us knew where it was, but the ever-intrepid Rich finally darted out of the car and crossed the street to ask directions from a bus driver who was waiting for the stoplight. The three of us who stayed in the car cringed, but Rich made it back safely and we made it to the station just in time.



Gracious! . . . er, that is . . . Mercy!

No doubt about it, my first New York adventure was fun. Right now I'm back at Northwestern, which is in Evanston, just north of the Second City. All the New Yorkers I know at school swear The City—that's what they call New York—is absolutely the greatest place in the world. Maybe it is. But I don't think I could ever hack living there—a perhaps unjustified predilection that I share with Jim Shooter. Really, it's not even a very nice—interesting, sure, but not nice—place to visit. That is, unless it's for a good reason. And Talok-2 next summer will be a pretty damn good reason.



Not being capable of Jay Zilber's crisp style, I'm afraid all I can do is plod through this issue's Update in my own dull way. First on the list is The Legion #202.

I really can't see why Carmine Infantino and his editors—with the exception of the "late" Archie Goodwin—are so much in love with those divided covers on the Superspecs. I've seen some great stuff from Nick Cardy, but it doesn't do any good to make him cram his scenes into tiny boxes. The issue's splash page was much better, even if it was lifted from Adventure #376.

It's ironic, as Leo Dorfman—rest his soul—would have said, that the biggest Legion book yet should lead off with the shortest Legion tale yet—only six pages, in fact. You can hardly expect a classic in so little space, but what we got came across pretty well—it was imaginative, and more or less original...though it did remind me of the first Legion story I ever read—"The Fantastic Spy," way back in Adventure #303.

And while Cary Bates may have piled on the gimmickry a

little too thick, and provided us with some humorous dialogue ("Shrinking Violet! What were you doing in my neck?") he generally told it well. This story also gave us our first look at Mike Grell, who inked Dave Cockrum this time around—and his style, especially on the monitor screens and nebulae, was remarkable! It perfectly complemented Dave, and it's a pity that this probably will be the first, last and only time they'll ever work together.

After which, Gim and Vi return to Earth and browse through some old Adventure Comics. Harry beat them to it way back in Outpost #4, so I'll just say that "The Legionnaire Who Killed" was a classic. But though this Nardo story had a good plot, the constant inane wise-cracks in it ruined it for me, as they did when I first read it. Not content to give the Legionnaires hideous dialogue like Robin used circa 1966 (he's a prolific punster—and except for Ferro Lad, the Legionnaires just aren't), author Edmond Hamilton gave a ruthless villain like Nardo stuff like "Go take a dive in a dried-up lake." Ughh!

Casping for breath, I latch onto "The Lore of the Le- 15

gion," which came across well—especially the new and sometimes-delightful Cockrum illoes. Well-researched, too—though it seemed to me that the author (Nelson Bridwell?) assumed the romances of Cosmic Boy and Chameleon Boy had advanced further than the stories themselves would seem to indicate. But then, we never can tell what's happening behind the closed doors...

And now the main feature—which evidently would have been the lead had it not necessitated breaking up the double-page splash. The story itself was below average, not having much of a plot—and what there was, was totally predictable, the only element of suspense being when the Legionnaires would learn that the Devil-Fish was a "good guy." (I must say, Dave's last-minute switch to Marvel didn't do anything for the creature's name!) But the story once again was saved by Dave's well thought-out art; his little touches continue to be impressive. Jay already has mentioned the Legionnaires getting their hair wet in that story, but I also got a kick out of the fact that we first saw the letters in "Wildfire" backwards. (After all, if he'd turned it around the Legionnaires would have seen it backwards—and they're the stars of the book, not us!) We'll miss you, Dave...

...Even though Mike Grell is a more than adequate successor! In his 21-page debut for the Legion and DC, "Massacre by Remote Control," he really got a chance to show his stuff—and did he ever! You could almost swear Neal Adams had drawn the figures, though there's a touch of Dave Cockrum there, too. But then, I suspect Mike's working from a Cockrum guide, having had no previous experience with the Legion. He's got the costumes, buildings and even the faces all down pat.

There are so many things I could mention—the unique way he depicted Invisible Kid's invisibility. Superboy and the guard on page 14 (it's about time someone realized many teen-aged boys are taller than most adults!)—the list goes on and on. It's true the second panel on page 13 was a direct swipe from page 3, panel 4 of The Legion #201's "The Silent Death," even to Dream Girl's dialogue—but who isn't guilty of that at times? Mike needs a little work on his backgrounds, though—to look at the story would make one think the Legion had just moved into its HQ and hadn't had time to unpack the furniture. But I suspect the main reason that's so noticeable is the fact that his primary figures are so detailed; C.C. Beck's backgrounds are even emptier, but who notices that?

The story was superior, too—the greatest fault I can find in it is the fact that the splash panel had little or nothing to do with the story. (Neither did the cover, for that matter, but I'm used to that.) The action and suspense were built up perfectly—Invisible Kid's death was tragic, but let's face it: he's only the second permanent (I trust) casualty in the ranks of a group that faces extreme danger every day. It's only "realistic"—and I wonder if Cary might not have got the idea from my letter in Outpost #3. After the Bouncing Boy-Duo Damsel nuptials, it's the second of my suggestions he's followed.

However...Karate Kid crashing through the manganium intertron walls of the HQ—which even Superboy presumably can't crack without extra effort?? I suppose it wasn't impossible with Element Lad around, but Cary needs to do a bit more research. And presumably it was sheer self-pity that led Invisible Kid to remark, "I guess I'm the only guy in the Legion who never had a steady girl friend." Even taking "steady" to mean "regular" rather than "exclusive" (which is all Superboy and Brainiac 5, to name two, have ever had) and including such doubtful cases as the aforementioned Cosmic Boy and Chameleon Boy, only 10 of the other 16 male Legionnaires have ever had steady girl friends. For that matter, even with Invisible Kid, Markita (in Adventure #338) certainly seemed like more than a casual date!

As for The Legion #204, I suppose Harry and Jay are getting slightly peeved at Cary over his continual use of the "impossible" changing of history. But I, for one, rather like it! Being a firm believer in free will—and the hypothesis that all human actions are not predetermined—it follows that, if time travel is possible, it must be possible to alter the past under some circumstances. It's true that Superman has found it impossible to do so—but that doesn't mean nobody else can, does it? After all, I can't lift a skyscraper as Superman can...

It also was interesting to see someone from the Legion's future involved in a story. Despite the constant use of time

travel in the strip, the only other characters originating after the Legion's time that I can recall were the adult legion of Super-Villains and perhaps the Time Trapper. Odd...

However...Once again there wasn't very much of a plot. The whole thing, as a matter of fact, was reminiscent of the Legion's very early days in Adventure, what with the younger Legionnaires, the old costumes, that monstrous piece of architecture resembling a crashed rocket, and even the 12-page story lengths. It's kind of a sad commentary on the present state of comics that today's leads are no longer than the early '60s' fillers.

But again, Grell's art was fine, though I'm getting a little tired of those bald futuremen; after all, didn't Superman find, in some Action story, that men would be basically the same even in the 1020th Century?

It turned out that "Brainiac's Secret Weakness" did not, after all, deal with the Twentieth Century villain (who might have survived into the Thirtieth Century for all we know; I never did buy his "infinitesimal shrinkage"), but with Brainiac 5. It was nice seeing Supergirl with the Legion for the first time in over three years, and I must say that Grell put Mooney, Saaf, Oksner, et al to shame in his depiction of her.

But the plot! Can't anybody think of anything more realistic or true-to-life? You'd think half the population of the universe consisted of schizophrenics, to look at Boltinoff's comics! Still, I'm glad to see that Brainiac 5 and Supergirl have not forgotten each other...

And then we have The Legion #205, another Superspec. And it's intriguing—"The Legion of Super-Executioners" didn't even show Superboy on the splash panel! Even in Adventure, he—or at least another established character like Supergirl—usually appeared there. Though it must be admitted that he did appear in the introductory splash, which was lifted, if memory serves, from Neal Adams' cover of Adventure #378, with a few touch-ups made on Duo Damsel's costume.

In any case, we have a nice, technically well-written story. But this time around there was little originality to the plot; how many times have we seen a villain gain control of the minds of everyone but the heroes in focus that issue, and finally be defeated through the wits of the heroes? Still, the unusual details, and Mike Grell's brilliant art, managed to pull it through.

But it just didn't ring true in places. How come the alien couldn't control Ultra Boy or Superboy, but could dominate everyone else, including Mon-El? How could Jo think straight enough to leave such an enigmatic (and unfair; I doubt many readers are familiar with Rimborian knots) clue during his fit of madness? And I do wish Cary would cool the contrived "futuristic" lines like "Did an ion tornado sweep through this place?"—especially from Superboy.

"The One-Man Team"? I can think of dozens of other Superboy stories, particularly those of the Forties, that I'd rather see! Besides, it didn't have anything to do with the Legion, so it's slightly beyond my scope here...

"The Outcast Super-Heroes," on the other hand, was a fine and classic reprint choice. It's true it came out in the middle of the "camp" era—and it shows—but the story's pretty good if you sublimate the awful gags, most of them highly inappropriate from aliens!

(Besides, Nelson tells me the worst one of all—page 20, panel 4 of the first segment—was put in at Mort Weisinger's insistence. Actually, Nelson does believe the Marvel heroes live on Earth-1, but that "certain web-headed character" was whipping his way around New York about a thousand years before the Legion's time...)

Still, on the whole, the story was a success—right down to the White Witch's easily-overlooked prediction of Ferro Lad's death. (I wonder what Cosmic Boy's "dreadful fate" was.) The fillers (most of the "Lore of the Legion" illoes, incidentally, were taken from Dave Cockrum's LSH coloring guide) were quite good, though I see Chemical King's home planet has been changed from Valdow to Phlon. And I wasn't all that full of praise in my complete letter on The Legion #203—but I've already said my piece on that, so I think I'll stop here.

Before I turn you over to Jay for his concluding remarks, I'd like to put in a word for Batmania. This is Biljo White's classic Batman fanzine which I've revived—and the first new issue, now on sale, contains a cover by Biljo, a

Continued on page 31

OTTO BINDER

...An
interview

**CAPTAIN
MARVEL**

THE
WORLD'S
MIGHTIEST
MORTAL



And who says nostalgia is dead? Certainly not Otto O. Binder, one of the Golden Age Fawcett men and perhaps one of the greatest comic book writers of all time.

This is the first in a series of interviews with Fawcett staffers conducted by Matt Lage, with Mr. Binder leading it off.

A writer whose tales were

highly imaginative and made the reader seem to be a part of the story, Mr. Binder answers the questions put to him here in the same way—making the reader feel that he is back in the '40s, among the greatest writers and artists in the business, part of an experience that never yet has been matched!

OUTPOST: First off, since you were with Fawcett until the very end, do you remember the last feature you worked on?

BINDER: Last story I wrote sticks in my mind, a serial for Marvel Family involving the Sivanas. When we got the bombshell news that all Fawcett comics were being discontinued, I indulged in a repressive desire and wrote a parody of that serial in which each of the Marvel Family, in turn, gets killed off—others thought it funny, but not very. It was too close to reality. Can't remember the title of the projected serial and I didn't save any of the written script, sorry to say, although I was paid for it. Wish I had kept it, for nostalgia's sake. We were a weebe gone bunch at that time, thinking all along that since we were helping the lawyers refute Superman's claims, we might win out. Only Fawcett decided to settle out of court and give up.

OUTPOST: You sound a bit despondent in that last sentence. Do you think Fawcett had a chance of winning the suit?

BINDER: Will Lieberman, Wendell Crowley, Beck and I, and others, often talked it over and felt that Fawcett had a chance to win. In fact, the appeal ruling of the first verdict, I understand, cleared Cap, but DC reinstated the case. I can tell you this—panel for panel, Superman swiped as much from Cap as vice versa, and sometimes even story ideas. And of course Superman was actually swiped by Siegel and Shuster from an old Joe E. Brown movie of an unclothed superhero who did all the feats Superman was to do later. I think Fawcett had a chance to get the suit thrown out of court for that reason. I also had a science fiction story in print in 1937, prior to Superman, calling my hero a "superman." Anyway, the story is garbled but it seems Fawcett settled not to avoid losing but because they wanted to get out of comics. You'll remember they dropped all the comics, not just CM&Co. It was the big slump on comic sales in the Fifties that evidently swung them into getting out of the business. Fawcett had, of course, a thriving series of magazines and a growing paperback book business to keep going, so it dropped the comics, which were barely holding their own or even losing money, and were expendable. This is probably the true story; not a "victory" for Superman at court.

OUTPOST: It has been told and told again of your sadness after killing off Mr. Mind. Now you were doing some comics work at DC before the lawsuit. After the suit killed off Cap, didn't you feel any sadness there? And were your relations with DC a bit strained, to say the least?

BINDER: The sadness over killing off Mr. Mind was brief, along with the serial. But the sadness over Cap being kicked into limbo was much more painful — particularly in my pocketbook. But not only that, but I really had a lot of fun doing the CM stories, and when it all end-

ed, it took the sunshine out of the day for a long time. Getting back to the question, my reaction to DC as being the executioner was hardly of friendly nature. In fact, we were all pretty sore and bitter about it — it seemed so heartless and greedy, DC wanting to hog the market by killing off its closest rival...but, then, that's business y'know. Bah. Stinks. Of course there was nothing personal in this and I went to work for Mort Weisinger at DC for a good many years, becoming a sort of chief writer on the Superman gang, launching both of the Lois Lane and Jimmy Olsen books, and writing the debut of Supergirl. The memory of Cap faded, but not rapidly. I could go on and on if you have a bucket for your tears of pity!

OUTPOST: Denny O'Neil and Kurt Schaffenberger are going to bring back the Monster Society complete with Mr. Mind to plague the Marvel Family once more. Beck thinks it's a gross mistake. What do you think about it? I mean, resurrecting a feature which you both created and killed.

BINDER: I think it's a mistake too. You can't recreate the mood of something done years before in an entirely different context as to what the world was like then. Mr. Mind happened to fit into that era and catch everyone's fancy, whereas today he will seem like just a silly worm written about by even sillier writers. It'll surprise me if it turns out good.

I'm always amazed, by the way, over the popularity of Mr. Mind. Even today, when grown-up fans—kids then—meet me they always mention Mr. Mind as being great. The only way I can account for it is that he was a surprising contrast to all the other villains, always big, brawny, devilish hulks, so that a tiny miserable worm, filled with more evil than all other villains combined, simply tickled the reader's fancy, I suppose. I was startled myself at the enormous fan mail that came in after the first chapter showing who Mr. Mind was, resulting in a long serial of 24 chapters.

Just might mention in passing, about Mr. Mind, that when I started the serial, I had no idea at all who the villain might be. I just started him off, as you may know, as a voice from nowhere, threatening down nasty things at the world. Along about the fourth or fifth chapter, the editors pinned me down—well, who is this rotter? I puzzled over it for a long time, wanting it to be something unusual and unique. I think it really bowled over the staff at Fawcett when I wrote the outline for the next chapter, making Mr. Mind a worm, of all things! And oddly enough, everyone took to it after they stopped splitting their sides. They thought I was kidding but saw I was serious. And when Beck heard of it, he got enthusiastic, saying he was tired of the same old humanlike villains. Beck really put a labor of love on that work as the art work attests, and made the damn thing believable. Wendell Crowley told me it was my greatest work. I was inspired I guess.

Sivana—and the Sivana family—were our favorite

'Mary Marvel was a pride and joy—an idea from upstairs'

villains in all the Marvel books. Beck particularly liked him and during our social get-togethers he would often bring up new ideas for Sivana. He too, reminiscent of Mr. Mind, was a "small" villain physically, depending rather on brain than brawn. Hence the ingenious and devilish ways he plagued the world in general and the Big Red Cheese—my favorite toss-in—in particular. Them were the days! A real golden era for us writers and artists, in more ways than money!

OUTPOST: Another serial of yours was the six-part Oggar one. That serial was hardly covered in Steranko's History, and to this day I've never seen a single part of it! But was it as interesting to you as the Monster Society epic? And who were the artists you worked on it?

BINDER: The Oggar series was really a flop, to be frank. It was again one of my ideas and it seemed to be great in my mind, but when it came to writing and developing the theme, it just sort of went nowhere and was quickly killed. That was how it worked — for every good idea, you dreamed up a couple of so-so ones. I would say that if one out of three of my stories—or any stories—was outstanding, something I felt proud of, that was a good average. As for the artists who worked on it, I'm blank. I have a sort of vague impression it was Beck's shop, with Pete Costanza, but I'm not blaming them for Oggar being a dud—the scripts were no good in the first place.

OUTPOST: The second volume of Steranko's History is perhaps the best research tome for information on the Fawcett era, but it does have its weak points—especially in regard to the supporting members of the Marvel saga. For instance, who created Cissie Somerly, Uncle Marvel, Joan Jameson, Ma and Pa Potter, Dexter Knox, et al?

BINDER: I think Uncle Marvel sprang fullblown from my mind, but my memory is very tricky. Wen Crowley and I used to bat around ideas and for all I know, it may have popped out of one of our bull sessions and he may have been the first to suggest it. Anyway, I did write the first story and develop the character, as I did with Freckles Marvel. We wanted the Mary Marvel feature distinctive from the other two—less heroics and more human interest by surrounding her with ordinary people and making her more homey or something of that nature. I had fun with both of these characters.

Mary Marvel was a pride and joy — an idea that originated from upstairs, who simply thought it good business sense to have a girl heroine join the other two Marvels. It seemed a natural and it was. I was given the assignment to work up her background and how she came to be Billy's sister, etc, and I wallowed in it. It was fun because it was different — the first super-type girl, at Fawcett anyway, and it automatically led to many cute and different kinds of situations and plots.

Anyway, Joan Jameson and Cissie Somerly were brought in, I think, through Beck's suggestions. Ma and Pa Potter were my creations, as was Dexter, to tone down too much of the super-super atmosphere surrounding the Cap'n. We were always on the hunt for new side characters, most of which became one-shots as they had no appeal. Tawky Tawny was of course my top side character — my sole creation, I believe—and quickly came to life so strongly that, as you know, he had more tales than Mr. Mind, though not in consecutive order like a serial. Beck and I, after the Fall of The House of Fawcett, even tried to sell Tawny to the syndicates and made samples. But without the presence of mighty Marvel, it fell flat

by itself. The Tawny-Cap combo was great, but splitting them or leaving one out simply didn't work.

OUTPOST: Adding to your answer, you created Mary, and your brother Jack was one of the most memorable artists to draw her. Was there ever a Binder-Binder collaboration?

BINDER: Yes, most of the time in fact. I think about 1948 on, after Jack had moved to upstate New York, he did all of the Mary Marvel stories till the end.

OUTPOST: When an artist/writer works on a feature for a long time, he feels very close to it, getting to know the character in some respects — this may get so far out of hand that he may argue with the editor over a point which he feels is totally out of character for the character. Did you have any disagreements during your work on Mary Marvel?

BINDER: I suppose Jack and I had disagreements at times, but none that I can remember so it couldn't have been important. At times Jack would phone me and suggest switching a panel around or something and I would always give him the go-ahead. Sometimes writers can't visualize a scene properly and then the artist has the right to beef. But then, he complained to all writers that there was too much action or too many balloons, thus robbing him of a chance to do his pretty scenes. Editors always stuck up for the writers and told Raboy to do it, or else, period. Poor guy, he must have felt like a pariah.

OUTPOST: Who created Billy Batson's valet, Steamboat, and what was the reason for his departure from the Fawcett books after Captain Marvel Adventures #68 — as if we didn't know?

BINDER: I think steamboat was the creation of Ed Herron, the greatest CM editor. Steamboat was dropped during the wave of criticism of any anti-minority leanings that came up in that period. Such as the word "niggers" being dropped from newspapers, movies, and all of the media. I recall distinctly writing a story with a typical Swede character saying "by yiminy" etc., when orders came down from above to abolish all such dialects, and I had to straighten out his speeches. I was all in favor, actually, of

anti-discrimination, so it didn't bother me, except that we did sigh once in a while because it was fun to depict such dialect groups and we never meant to degenerate them, merely play them for humor.

We thought it kind of sad that the public just couldn't distinguish between harmless well-meant dialect characters and true racial antipathy. Just because we had Swedes talking as they do, or the famed Yiddish talk, didn't mean we hated or looked down on them. Ah well, so it goes. The only dialects after the war that were allowed were the "so sorry please" Japanese and the "dumkoph" Germans...until they became our allies and thereby "respectable." All very ridiculous.

OUTPOST: Who originated the cities-of-the-country series and did you write many of them?

BINDER: To my recollection, that series came down from above. That is, from the Fawcett boys who ran the outfit as a promotional scheme to increase sales in those places, city by city. I think it was highly successful, with mayors, etc., cooperating and considerably increasing sales in each turn. Yes, I did write a good many of them, perhaps most of them, but to find out you'll have to consult Jerry Bails' listings "Who's Who in Comics," Volume One. My personal records are buried and I don't have the time or the energy to dig them out, sorry. But



OTTO BINDER (April, 1972)

as I say, Jerry has the total information of all the scripts I wrote, not only for Marvels, but for all publishers. So they are not lost to posterity after all.

OUTPOST: Still on the subject of who-created-what, where did the Marvel Family originate from?

BINDER: The Marvel Family I'm not sure, but I think originated from upstairs. Or maybe Will Lieberman simply was to add to another good title and suggested combined adventures of all three Marvels together — a real blockbuster idea in those days. Again I was given the assignment to launch it all and Sivana seemed a logical villain, or rather, the Sivana Family. I think both Georgia and Junior were already in existence at that time so it was only natural to pit both families against each other.

OUTPOST: Let's get off Fawcett and comics for a while and concentrate on yourself. You originally wanted to be a pulp writer. Did you want this more than writing for the comics?

BINDER: Well, as of today when it's far too late, I wish I had stuck to pulps, especially writing book lengths — today some would be reprinted and I'd be getting royalties. Unfortunately, I dropped the pulps around 1941 because comics paid much more. I was able to double and triple my income for the next twelve years. But who would guess that the bonanza—at Fawcett anyway—would end abruptly plus the possibility that Cap would have gotten into the syndicates with myself as writer and Beck as artist. It was pretty well being set up just after the court case, but of course that ended when Cap was forbidden to appear anywhere else after that. So I lost out on a good thing in the comics and also had abandoned the pulps and sci-fi markets. So it goes...

OUTPOST: Why couldn't you have gone back to the pulps after the demise of Cap? The pulp publishers knew of your talents from years before — so why weren't you rehired?

BINDER: I did try the pulp field for awhile and sold about a half-dozen short stories to Science Fiction Plus, edited by Sam Moskowitz. I also sold a story here and a story there to other mags, but the rates at 1¢ and 2¢ a word were miserable; sci-fi has always been a miserable paying field as any writer can tell you. Compared to comics, where I get from \$10 to \$15 a page, it seemed to pay about five times as much in comparison to the time and effort involved. So I took up Mort Weisinger's offer to work at DC—I had held off a few months—and went back into comics which then took up my full time and paid well. As I mentioned before, I wish now that I had stuck to sci-fi and written book length stories as the

'I took up Mort Weisinger's offer to work at DC'

book market at that time was starting to expand nicely. Today I would be getting reprint royalties as other writers are, from sci-fi. Who can look into the future?

OUTPOST: The inevitable question, are you writing these days?

BINDER: Yes, of course. I'm far from retired, simply because I can't afford it. All the money I made from the Marvels and had saved up went down the drain when, in 1960, I invested as a junior partner in publishing Space World, a magazine about astronautics. Maybe you never ran across it but I think it was a good job I did as editor-in-chief — although the public stayed away from it in droves. Though it was the exciting time when the first manned flights occurred, and the moon shots, somehow the public interest was low. It didn't really charge up until the Apollo flights. Result: a loss every month on low sales. The mag lasted some 16 issues, during which time Bill Woolfolk and I had put in more money — I mortgaged my house—all paid up by Cap—and borrowed, etc., but we never got the lucky break. So that left me without money reserves and it was back to the comics un-

til 1967, when my daughter — our only child — was killed by a car at age 14. For reasons difficult to explain, my wife and I moved from Englewood, New Jersey to upstate New York where Jack lived. I was pretty broken up and found it difficult to write again up here, but I went back to sci-fi, this time books as the market was hit.

From 1969 to 1972 I had about 15 books published, some fresh, some reprints of my old stuff—the few novel lengths I had done. But sci-fi, if you know anything about the field, was subtly changing, veering away from regular plotted stories to God knows what. I still haven't figured it out yet. Into some avant garde wild blue yonder of impressionism or exosociology or whatever that left me hanging out on a limb. I just couldn't write that stuff and my market dried up. Meanwhile, I had been writing articles about UFOs for Saga magazine, also two UFO paperback books. They were followed by two frontier novels — completely different than anything I had done before. Two sold so far. I have another book making the rounds of the publishers right now that is my "big one"

'From 1969 to 1972 I had about 15 books published'

as far as I'm concerned. Deals with UFOs but in an indirect way, by proving that mankind is a hybrid of early humans and star-people who came ages ago in flying saucers. The proof lies in evolutionary clues — you'd have to read it to get the gist. So, to sum it up, I'm out of sci-fi and the comics. I'm in UFOs, historical novels, and a bit of psychic stuff. The only comics I've done were for Classics Comics, adaptations from literary classics, for Vince Fago, several a year.

OUTPOST: Let's get into the Fawcett people now. Every artist and writer regards some of his colleagues as his favorites. Who were your favorite artists, writers and editors?

BINDER: Among artists, Beck was of course my favorite. I took great delight in his renditions of my CM scripts and thought that he was a bit of a genius. He was the only artist allowed by the Fawcett editors to change scripts a bit, insert or delete certain panels, and change wording, but he never took advantage to make wholesale changes, just improvements along the way. We sometimes differed sharply over a particular story sequence—he would show me the roughs—but we would always come to a compromise. As an anecdote indicating his cleverness, one panel showed a crook being socked by Cap. The crook was hanging upside down in the air, the word "Help!" appearing the same way. Beck was at his superb best with Mr. Mind, which he delighted in for its sense of the ridiculous.

Writer? Ed Herron, hands down, for his early CM scripts — great! Also Bill Woolfolk who wrote sensitively for Captain Marvel, Jr., and whom I discovered more or less. I served as an editor briefly for six months at Fawcett way back in '43. During that time, my job included going through unsolicited material, junk, mostly hopeless stuff by would-be writers. I remember the thrill I got one day from reading a Woolfolk script. I rushed in to the then editor-in-chief, Rod Reed, and from then on...we bought Woolfolk scripts regularly. He had of course already sold to Arnold's Quality comics before that. I just got him started at Fawcett.

Editors? Wendell Crowley, without question. As I mentioned before, we worked in close harmony on stories for all the Marvels, of which he was in charge. After the Marvels were killed, and Wen joined his father's lumber business — which he hated — we still remained close friends, both of us living in Jersey. We played bridge often with our wives, and when Wendell died from a heart operation some years ago, I had truly lost a loved pal.

I should amend this by saying that probably Ed Herron was the best editor. He took over Cap in 1940 and rapidly built up the character with his own stories and



**MR.
MIND.**

THE WORLD'S
WICKEDEST WORM,
AND

SYMANA.

THE WORLD'S
MADDEST SCIENTIST,
WERE NEVER SUCCESSFUL
IN THEIR BATTLES
AGAINST
CAPTAIN MARVEL ◻ ◯

I'LL FIND A PLACE WHERE
NO ONE EVER HEARD OF
CAPTAIN MARVEL! THEN I'LL
INVENT A FIENDISH, INHUMAN
DEVICE TO MAKE ME
RULER OF THE UNIVERSE!



C.C. BECK

from plots he suggested to others like me. His history is tragic, of course. He was drafted in 1942 and when he came back he was denied his old job because Fawcett had found out that he had written scripts on the sly — other publishers didn't mind if editors contributed stories, but Fawcett did. Anyway, apparently embittered, he presumably turned state's evidence over to DC that CM was a direct copy of Superman, which may or may not have turned over the case against the Fawcetts. But even at DC after that, where he was given all of the writing he wanted to do, he did superb scripts — the editors admit that. Tragically, he turned alcoholic and died in a VA hospital...I saw him a week before, a wreck of a once-brilliant man.

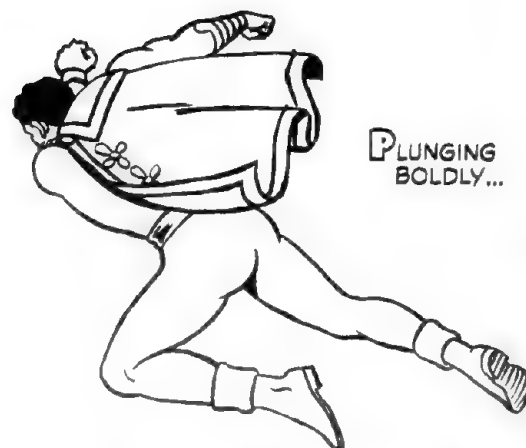
OUTPOST: Rod Reed depicts artist Mac Raboy as a somewhat introverted individual, while Kurt Shaffenberger cites him as an artist who drew pretty pictures, and not much of anything else. Any comments?

BINDER: Raboy was indeed moody and introspected. He couldn't seem to communicate with editors and writers. He would sometimes mumble to me that he didn't like a certain CMJr. script I had done, but never made it clear what he wanted — except less action and more "scenes." He loved to make beautiful artistic "paintings" out of each panel, but hell, they don't tell a story! Rod Reed used to get fuming mad at Raboy and bawl him out constantly for neglecting to play up the action sequences, yet somehow CMJr. did come out good and sold well. All the artists swiped from him and his photostats were often pasted in to Jr. stories done by other artists, whenever they fit, such as a flying sequence. Oddly enough, though he looked thin and awkward, Raboy turned out to be a terrific ball-hawk during our Fawcett-party baseball games — softball. He loped like an antelope and never missed a fly ball. At one of the parties at my home — we took turns — he had a heart attack and scared the hell out of us all. He recovered nicely, but I guess was marked for an early death, as happened. His work on Flash Gordon, I guess, was good in his latter days. I never met him after he left Fawcett.

OUTPOST: Your thoughts on Kurt Shaffenberger, Rod Reed, Beardsley, Naughton, Crowley, and so on?

BINDER: Kurt's work — excellent. I think he "made" Lois Lane by making her much more human, appealing, and alive. The expressions he put on her face were really great. More importantly, he tells the story with his art. Many artists kill a story or make it dull by failing to make good transitions from panel to panel to keep the continuity intact. Choosing how to show each scene is vital and Kurt always chooses right. Wendell was the ideal editor, contributing ideas when we discussed plots, keeping the artists in line so they "told the story right," and checking everything carefully. Wendell had great enthusiasm and really cared. I can't put it any other way. When Fawcett killed its comics line and he had to go into his father's lumber business, he was the saddest sack of us all. He openly admitted he loved comics.

Rod Reed wasn't editor long enough, only a year or two, for me to have much comment. He was competent, quite definitely, but he gave up the Fawcett job to edit some Broadway be-bop mag or something, his real love. As a person, Rod was superb — friendly as hell, full of guilps, warm, full of laughs — I mean he laughed a lot. The one rub was trying to get away from him if you went into a bar together. He wouldn't let you go and kept buying the drinks. Loved companionship. I remember telling him once that I heard a rumor he had given up drinking. His answer was, "That's a filthy lie!" He acted insulted at the mere thought. Beardsley I hardly knew at all, just for a small stint at Fawcett and then at Quality. I think he had a knack for picking good writers and keeping them loyal — Quality Comics I think had the best all-round writing in the field for years. Tom Naughton was editor for a while — during the early war years when the draft kept things in turmoil — a jolly fellow who didn't take the job seriously and thought comics were ridiculous. Will Lieberman who became editor-in-chief around 1945—medical discharge from service—and remained so to the end was the right man for the job. He kept the writers and artists in line, added new titles, and in general made it a going business.



PLUNGING
BOLDLY...



...OR LEAPING
HEADLONG...

...CAPTAIN MARVEL
ALWAYS SAVED THE DAY!

OUTPOST: Excluding the Marvels, what other Fawcett features did you write a lot of? And your Fawcett scripting included westerns and Marvel Bunny. Any difficulties in writing those?

BINDER: Besides the Marvels, I'm not really sure what other characters I wrote for. I know I did quite a lot of Ibis, Golden Arrow, and Captain Midnight, and such. Come to think of it, one feature I did many scripts for was Bulletman and that he may be the mostest of the bunch. As for the one I liked best, I would have to cite—excluding CM&Co.—Bulletman, who lent himself to a wide range of stories. Writing westerns was duck soup really, especially the adaptations from movies like Ken Maynard and others. The kid comics I did very little of, just a couple for Marvel Bunny and some short features, but I never got involved with them to any extent.

OUTPOST: How did the collaboration of Lieberman, Crowley, Binder, Beck, and Reed come together in the Sixties? Was it as enjoyable as the old days?

BINDER: The Miller brothers, Bernie and (?), were the backers and Will Lieberman was the publisher. I guess the three of them talked over old times and decided to try putting out something with Captain Marvel's appeal. They called in Wendell and me, Wen as editor, myself as writer, and we wrote to Beck in Florida. The character was decided upon after long discussions, the Fat Man, but I'm afraid we never recaptured the whimsical essence of Cap. Anyway it flopped after a couple of issues, also the Green Beret which I also wrote. We had a third character lined up — Captain Shazam. Costume and gimmicks all worked out but by then came in the sales report on Fat Man and the Millers decided they had had enough. They lost plenty. No, I really didn't enjoy writing for Fat Man as much as for Cap. It was fun in a way as he was a good zany character but somehow he didn't have the oomph or whatever seemed part of CM.

OUTPOST: Just out of morbid curiosity — are you getting any

residuals from the old Fawcett stories that DC is reprinting?

BINDER: Not as yet. There was a rumor — via Tom Fagan or perhaps Marty Greim — that DC was planning to pay residuals once they got the listings of who wrote what, presumably from Jerry Bails or somebody. Nothing has happened so far. I would of course welcome any such payments even if small—will be for sure—as DC robbed me

'I really didn't enjoy writing the Fat Man'

of a young fortune by killing off Captain Marvel and Company.

OUTPOST: In *All in Color for a Dime*, a book dedicated to you, author Richard Lupoff questions one point of the Marvel mystique: when Billy Batson says, "Shazam!", did he become Cap or was he thrown into some sort of limbo, like Marvel Comics' Captain Marvel?

BINDER: Ouch. There you've asked a question that can never really be settled. We at Fawcett didn't bother much about esoteric details and simply treated it as if Billy actually changed into Cap, and thereby was nonexistent, or alive as a man. I know that Cap always referred to Billy as a separate person, and Billy with CM, so per-

haps the more logical viewpoint — many fans I met thought it that way — that they were separate individuals and that when one appeared, the other went into the "limbo" as you put it. You know, that would have made a great story! Wish I had thought of it at the time! But more likely Will Lieberman would have vetoed it as opening a can of worms that might get involved and confuse or disturb the readers. I think most readers simply assumed Billy changed into Cap and that of course was the reason why CM outsold all other superheroes, including Superman. What boy reader, identifying himself with Billy, didn't feel the thrill of changing into a big, powerful, unbeatable superhero? It was the perfect formula!

OUTPOST: Speaking of formulas, with your writings, was there any set story formula?

BINDER: No, decidedly not. There was no set pattern of any kind. In fact, we avoided any suggestion of repetition or similarity. Each story was to have its own unique approach. The stories in each book were tailored to be as unlike as possible, for variety.

OUTPOST: Were there any problems in writing particular stories?

BINDER: Problems? You have to be jesting. Many stories were problems because they were too crammed with plotting so that the writer had to squeeze and make rapid transitions, etc., to the detriment of the final story. Some scripts required too much wordage, both captions and dialogue, that all panels were crowded and created a problem for the artist to depict anything. All the writer could do was to cram it in and let the editor cut where he could, which sometimes hacked up a story badly. Sometimes I would write a script halfway through and then

No satisfaction: Beck and DC, one year later

One year ago, fandom learned of the battle raging between artist C.C. Beck and National over the quality of the *Shazam!* comic. Beck eventually refused to illustrate two stories that were sent to him and was therefore dismissed from any further work on the mag. The stories, "The Invasion of the Salad Men" and "The Incredible Cape-Man" then were turned over to other artists. *Shazam!* seemingly had seen the last of Beck. Or had it?

An agreement was struck around last September that might have kept Beck on *Shazam!*'s staff. Vowing never to return unless the stories were upgraded, Beck agreed to illustrate stories which he himself would write. And so, Assistant Editor E. Nelson Bridwell promptly sent a batch of old Fawcett comics down to Florida for Beck's perusal. Clearly, the situation was between Beck and DC, with Bridwell as the go-between.

In October, Beck sent Bridwell a story in script form only—no art accompanied it. Beck believed the script immediately would be okayed, since he felt it conveyed the true flavor of the Captain Marvel sagas of years before. But as late as the middle of this February, Beck still had not heard from Bridwell regarding the story. However, Beck heard shortly afterward, when the script was returned to him.

Beck's story had dealt with the Seven Deadly Enemies of Man. And it had been almost completely rewritten by Bridwell.

Beck tells it like this:

"Bridwell helped my story by almost completely rewriting it. He took out all the good material and put in a bunch of typical DC junk. As just one example: I

had a witch put a hex on a photo which was given to Billy. The curse starts working on Billy and also on Marvel, making them uneasy, worried, unable to make up their minds and the like. Bridwell changed this to a 'dream inducer stolen from a scientist' hidden in the picture's frame. It made Billy have a nightmare with demons which came out of his dream and attacked Pa Potter. Pa fell out the bedroom window and Marvel had to rescue him. Big deal!

"Then he put in scenes of Billy's secretary, various small-time hoodlums acting up, Marvel flying around with Uncle on his back or 'clinging to his leg.' The story now made no sense at all, so I refused to draw it up. End of incident! Never again! Back in the old days we artists enjoyed working on stories and gave all the credit to the writers. We used to chuckle and grin as we worked, not mutter and gag as we would be doing today."

Meanwhile, Bridwell was promising that the Beck story would be showing up in *Shazam!*. As it appears now, either that story won't show up (as it won't, since it's Beck's property) or a wholly different story will be published concerning the Seven Enemies, albeit without Beck's ideas.

Beck went on to say, "Every cover of *Shazam!* so far has been a 'standing around' or posed cover, where the Fawcett covers were always good action poses of CM doing something. At Fawcett they had me furnish three cover ideas for each issue and pick the best of the bunch, or called for more ideas. At DC, all cover ideas have come from Carmine Infantino, who seems to think that a hero should always be shown just looking heroic like an

old Charles Atlas ad. My grandson showed me a drawing of Superman in exactly the same pose as Marvel on the cover of *Shazam!* #11. Even the capes were similar!"

What about "The World's Mightiest Dessert," the Bridwell story that would surely have been turned down by Beck had he still been working for DC when it was printed? "The story was started last summer/1973, presumably at the New York Con/ when I was having lunch with Julie Schwartz, Sol Harrison and Bridwell," Beck said. "They asked me if I wanted dessert and I said, quoting Jack Benny from his old Jello-sponsored show, 'There's always room for Jello!'"

"Nelson, make a note of that!" Schwartz shouted. "A wonderful story idea. Go to work on it!" And thus was born this weak, childish story."

Before fading from fandom's attention, Beck managed to cut loose a few barbs in his article, "How to Create a Completely Awful Comic Character in Practically No Time at All" in *Inside Comix* #2. The character employed in Beck's fantasy, "Dar the Invincible," was described as wearing bulging tights, a split "V" shirt, flowing cape and possessing a sword which could take on an entire army at once—gimmicks that have been used on all too many swashbucklers of the Seventies. And of course, the creation of the character runs the gamut from the publisher to the "Assistant Underling," and to the writer and artist.

Hanging up his prodrom brush, Beck can still be seen once in a while with his occasional forays into fandom where his spot illoes pop up.

Comics' loss is fandom's gain. —ML

see it could never be finished in the panels left, so I had to rip it up and start all over, grinding my teeth. With difficult stories, I would often make a panel-by-panel breakdown for myself, just indicating the scenes briefly and a few key words. That way I avoided leaving myself hanging in the air at the end with more panels needed to finish the story. That's about one hundredth of the problems that came up. None of the scripts were "easy" to write, as most people seem to think, deceived by the story's "simplicity".

OUTPOST: In writing all of those stories, some 53 per cent of all the Marvel sagas, where did you get all the ideas from? That's a helluva lot of material.

BINDER: I think I previously mentioned that Beck and Wendell did at times supply ideas, but in the main it was up to me. Where one gets ideas is a rather pointless question. You don't find them on street corners or hidden in vases — you have to think them out. Beat your brains out mostly. Of course a gem of an idea could at times come from an item in a newspaper or magazine, maybe from a science fiction tale, etc. But mostly I think it was just running various trial thoughts through your mind until one of them clicked. Very hard to describe. At times ideas were hard to get and seemed to obstinately stay out of reach. Other times, the ideas flowed in and I'd jot down a half a dozen basic themes, although not all would be usable. Writing is a lonely business and the labor of extracting ideas out of your skull is not by any means fun. The fun is writing them up when your idea has gelled and you get all enthused about it. There, now you know as much about it as before — no thing.

OUTPOST: Story conferences usually involve an editor, writer, and sometimes an artist, whenever there is a conference. The writer may come in with an idea, the editor helps with the idea, giving suggestions here and there, and the two of them suggest what should be drawn in the scene. Now back in the golden age, with so many comic shops around like Beck's and Chesler's, story conferences with an artist involved would have to have been impossible—they drawing the story in the dark, so to speak. Did this ever affect the quality of the stories?

BINDER: The story conferences at Fawcett were always between the editor and the writer, never with the artist involved. Beck is the one exception and was at times invited into a discussion for his ideas, but it wasn't of-

'Some of the new CM stories are quite good'

ten that. All Marvel stories I wrote were talked up between myself and the succession of editors—Herron, Reed, Naughton and the parade that came after circa 1943. When Wendell Crowley became editor, to last through to 1953, I think most of my best scripts came through in that Wendell was the ideal editor, contributing many ideas. He was a live one. As for the lack of artist participation affecting the work, I think it would have hindered it. Almost all the artists had no story sense at all, being strictly craftsmen, and good ones at that. They often saved a bad story by making it look good; but not by changing any of the scenes or dialogue or captions—this was verboten—but simply by visualizing the animation properly. Outside of your very few artist-writers—Jack Kirby, Will Eisner, et al—the comics artists had no part in plotting or writing a story. It came to them complete and they simply drew it up. I was astounded, by the way, to hear quite a few artists admit that they never read a script through first to see what the story was all about. They simply started working on panel one and went to the end—and probably had no idea of what the story was about. In one case, that of Pete Riss, who died many years ago, he was accidentally given the same script twice, a love story type. He patiently plodded through it the second time and turned



CAPT. MARVEL IN "THE SECRET OF THE RING"

it in, much to the consternation of the editor. I think they paid him half price for the second version, which was almost exactly like the first one! Pete had no idea it wasn't two different stories!

OUTPOST: You've seen the past few issues of Shazam!, I'm sure. What do you think about the new Captain Marvel? A lot of fans agree that issue #1 was the only worthwhile one, and we all know Beck's thoughts [which we won't print here since we have to send this interview through the mail]. What are your thoughts on Shazam!?

BINDER: I might surprise you by saying some of the new CM stories are quite good, but in the main I agree with Beck. It must be difficult for the new writers to recapture the whimsy and gaiety we used 30 years ago. I myself wouldn't even try to recapture it. We were more or less inspired in those days, in context with a different world and long-gone values. My opinion would be that the new stories are too whimsical, or maybe downright silly at times. We of the old days treated Cap lightly with humor and satirical plots, but nevertheless we were quite serious about putting across Cap's sterling character, so to speak, with Billy Batson as the ideal counterfoil. We took great care to keep them always in character. But that took endless discussions, while being immersed with the atmosphere of the times, all of which the new writers are missing. Hence their attitude toward the CM character is...well, out of character. Hard to explain...

OUTPOST: Today comics will deal with everything from superheroes, straight sci-fi, horror and juvenile comedy. Would you think this is good or bad, especially when you take into consideration that none of them are like the comics that belonged to the Whiz gang?

BINDER: Well, I suppose most comics will have to play it straight and use realism. There wouldn't be room for too many humorous types. Actually, the Marvel stories aren't humor in the strictest sense of the word but rather satire and parody of life situations and the doings of humans, good and bad. One might say the tone of CM is "whimsy," a series of fantasies reflecting life through funny mirrors like those at amusement parks. The subject

MISTUH BILLY,
YOU LOOKS WORRIED.

I AM,
STEAM-
BOAT!

STEAMBOAT, BILLY'S FAITHFUL SERVANT, HAD TO BE DROPPED DURING THE WAVE OF CRITICISM OF ANY ANTI-MINORITY LEANINGS THAT CAME UP.

NOTE: HIS NAME WAS **NOT** STEAMBOAT WILLIE AS IS SOMETIMES SAID! "STEAMBOAT WILLIE" WAS THE TITLE OF THE FIRST MICKEY MOUSE MOVIE.

C.C. BECK

HAVE
A GOOD
NOSEFUL!

TO ANY MEMBER OF THE CAT FAMILY, CATNIP ACTS LIKE A POWERFUL DRUG!

SHAY, THASH STUFF'S
GOOD!
HIC!

MR. TAWNY GOT HIMSELF INTO MANY PREPOSTEROUS PREDICAMENTS!

matter is recognizable but distorted by exaggeration, spoofing, or running jokes. The secret of it all was that Captain Marvel and Billy were dead serious and never made a joke at all. It was how we played up the slapstick and puns and situation comedy that made it all funny. But remember this: Young kids usually don't get the joke at all. They take it seriously, namely the battle between good and evil with the good guy—Cap—always winning. In a sense, CM was like Jonathan Swift's satires of political situations, and also like Alice in Wonderland which to the adult is a study of human nature. I always felt I was exploring and exploiting human nature too, digging out the zany aspects to show that much of life was a joke and plenty full of craziness. Despite the humor whimsy, CM was pretty close to real life. Witness Mr. Tawny and his typically human situations. I guess that's why Anthony Boucher, many years ago, wrote me letters telling how brilliant certain stories were. Some of the best fantasy-satire in the world, he said. He and his sons followed CM faithfully throughout his career. Yet of course I often met people who found out what I did for a living and said, "What?! You write that childish drivel?" So it goes...

OUTPOST: Mr. Tawny was the ultimate of the supporting characters in the Captain Marvel saga. How did the character come to be created. In a bull session? And weren't you a bit hesitant of having a talking animal in the script—it being a bit way out? And was Tawny a satirical gimmick of yours—somewhat paralleling Swift's Gulliver's Travels, where, as you said before, the voyages and characters were double-meaning, satirizing English society of Swift's time?

BINDER: As far as I can recall, Tawny was my own concept, which the editor and Beck, particularly, thought was good right away. Beck did such a great job of personifying the tiger that he caught on with the readers. A flood of letters came in on the first story, so we continued him. I wouldn't say the Tawny stories were exactly satires; they were more parodies of human life, showing our weaknesses and foibles by the many preposterous predicaments that Tawny got himself into. Captain Marvel was really the side character in all of this, sort of Tawny's sidekick. We made Tawny as loveable and bumbling as we could, which led to the reader's sympathy. We also represented a version of Walter Mitty and his great dreams, with the same unfortunate results. But the really big keynote in Tawny was the humorous situations possible, and humor was a keynote of CM. That is, CM himself—and Billy—were always played straight with humorous situations built around them, especially through a zany character like the talking tiger.

OUTPOST: With the many comic companies of the '40s—National, Timely, Quality, and so on, why was the character of Radar given to Fawcett? The character was indeed created as a propaganda device, but why was Fawcett alone singled out.

BINDER: This I know nothing about, the "politics" behind Radar. Evidently, Fawcett had a sort of "in" or whatever with the CIA, Interpol, or what have you. I can't help you here. Will Lieberman would be the one to know.

OUTPOST: Okay, somehow Fawcett was selected. But why were such distinguished writers—Rex Stout, of Nero Wolfe, and Paul Gallico, of The Poseidon Adventure—in on it?

BINDER: Though I still don't know how Radar worked in, I can say this—that during the war, Rex Stout was chairman of a group under the Office of War Information with the task of creating war propaganda. Several of the Fawcett editors and myself were called in periodically to discuss ways and means of getting anti-Nazi and anti-Jap propaganda in the comics...which we did along with all other comics publishers. Will Lieberman was called in periodically and worked closely with Rex Stout and Gallico, which may have led somehow to Radar being assigned to Fawcett. I don't know; I'm guessing.

OUTPOST: In writing the Radar stories, what path did you take? Sort of make him out to be a secret agent type?

BINDER: I neither originated nor wrote many of the scripts. By the way, Roy Ald was editor and he may have had political connections that brought Radar to Fawcett. I filled in now and then with a Radar story, but other writers did the bulk of it.

OUTPOST: A rather controversial question, especially now as Beck sent a story in to DC and it was rewritten by Bridwell. Do you think the editor has the right to rewrite a story, supplied to but not assigned by him?

BINDER: Oh boy! If Bridwell did rewrite a story of Beck's, I'll bet the fur is flying! I doubt Beck took to that kindly, and his relationship with DC must be deteriorating, to put it mildly. As to whether the editor has the right, yes and no. He has the legal right, as a company employe, to alter a script in any way he chooses. As to his ethical right to tamper with a writer's ideas and manner of writing is another story—with a good editor, I never felt disturbed if he changed the script around somewhat. With a lousy editor—and I've had many outside Fawcett—you feel resentment as they have ruined your story, so to speak. However, as long as they paid, what the hell? DC is notorious, of course, for hashing up scripts as they please. Hardly a script of mine went in exactly as I wrote it, though some came close. DC simply had a rigid pattern or formula to which every story in every book had to conform. Their editing, however, was carefully and responsibly done so that the writer could never complain as to the final quality. It was reasonably good—but with most of the original life—inspiration—in it blue-penciled out. That I think is why the stereotyped style of Superman couldn't compete with the free and open writing of CM, which consistently outsold Superman during the war years.

OUTPOST: Still a few more questions on the Fawcett staffers. Your words on Manly Wade Wellman, Bill Woolfolk, Pete Riss, Pete Costanza, Marc Swayze, Ken Bald and this guy named Jack Binder—professionally speaking.

BINDER: Manly Wellman, a good pal of mine from pulp sci-fi, only entered the comics field briefly for he needed money at the time. He started early, by the way, with Chesler's outfit and then went along to Fawcett. I really can't remember much about his scripts but I would certainly suspect they were competently done as he was an experienced writer.

Bill Woolfolk I think I mentioned before. Really a good writer, who today is in Doubleday's stable of top-

'I wrote a modest number of EC horror comics'

notch writers. None of Woolfolk's books have hit the bestseller lists yet, but I'll bet that one of these days...

Pete Riss, another close friend, was perfectly content with comics—a rather simple soul. Competent in his artwork and especially good with faces and figures, which was why he gravitated mainly to romance comics in his last years. He had much more talent than showed in his comics work, doing paintings and other art that might have achieved fame for him had he loved longer.

Pete Costanza was constantly jittering over whether he was doing good work or not. He turned out some excellent things but also some bad ones. An up-and-down artist. He was associated mostly with Beck as his inker, and also ran Beck's shop while he had one.

Ken Bald was really talented and it soon came out when comics declined after the war. He had already begun doing commercial art for ads and was soon doing great and making big money. Good at figures, realistic stuff, almost anything. He has also had several syndicated strips, you know—if I could think of the names. ["Dark Shadows," "Judd Saxon" and "Dr. Kildare"—ML/]

Jack Binder, in spite of all he did in the comics field, never had his heart and soul in it. He himself admits he did some poor stuff at times. However, he did make successes out of Mary Marvel and some western char-

Continued on page 31

Correspondence...



Thanks for sending me The Legion Outpost #6. I'm still interested in the fan press; after all, I am still editing a fanzine, albeit one Marvel pays for. I don't think I'll ever stop being a fan. (Yes, I know that last line sounds like a Roy Thomas quote, but it's true...and all the Joe Brancatellis in the world can't change that.)

Comments? The least I can do.

Marty Pasko's piece smacks of "rationalization." In short, I think Marty is trying to convince himself that he hasn't sold out, that he hasn't cheapened his talent by accepting DC's standards of quality. I like Marty Pasko personally. Ditto Cary Bates. Their writing just doesn't make it in my mind, not compared to the higher standards we have at Marvel.

Sounds like a war of the company men, doesn't it?

I've been a Marvel fan for a long time, though, and I haven't changed. Marvel's more dynamic and, yes, more literate style made me want to write comic books for a living. DC, except for a handful of brief flashes of genius, bores me to tears. Since Len Wein left National, they had only one real writer left...the fantastic Frank Robbins. Aside from Mr. Robbins, it's a second-rate writing staff. All of which is getting away from the point I want to make here. A moment of silence and here we go...

I do not believe comics consists of silly stories in which an infantile menace threatens a lackluster personality like the Flash or the Atom. I do believe in dynamic storytelling with a reasonable amount of literary style. I believe Marvel gives this to its readers. Look at Conan, Tomb of Dracula, Man-Thing, Black Panther, and a dozen others. Then look at The Flash. And laugh.

Sorry, Marty, you can't rationalize DC's low standard by parroting phrases handed down by people who don't realize the medium's potential. Or, as is more probably the case, don't care.

Point of information: That story in House of Mystery. It was first submitted to Marvel. I rejected it. That alone should show Marvel's got some taste!

As for Mike Flynn's column, I tend to ignore people who shout that I am lacking in intelligence because I do not agree with them on some trivial matter or another. I made mistakes in running the fan awards. Perhaps the limiting of the ballot was one of them...I think not. And to suggest that this decision was made because I work for Marvel (and am therefore wealthy—hah!) or live in a mammoth city is ludicrous. Like I said, I tend to ignore people like that. A wise policy, I think.

Despite Marty and Mike, I did enjoy this issue very much. As you know, Harry, I was a fan of Dave Cockrum's Legion work, though no one will ever convince me the strip has had a writer since Hamilton and Shooter left the series. And now it doesn't even have a real artist. Shame, 'cause the concept is cool.

Again, Harry, thanks for letting me see this issue and best wishes for the future.

Yers truly,
TONY ISABELLA
575 Madison Avenue
New York NY 10022
May 16, 1974

(Marty Pasko informs us that his story in House of Mystery #226, which Tony mentioned in his letter, never was submitted to Marvel. —MF)

* * *

I liked it—I liked it!

Best,
BILL GAINES
485 Madison Avenue
New York NY 10022
May 22, 1974

(My God, even his name is bigger than his letters! —MF)

* * *

Many, many thanks for The Legion Outpost #6. I read it avidly from cover to cover, and must confess that I enjoyed every syllable. Once again, you've proved that this is by far the best fan mag in the business, and I'm sure that your readers will enthuse as much as I did.

All the best,
MURRAY BOLTINOFF
75 Rockefeller Plaza
New York NY 10019
May 16, 1974

* * *

Glad to see The Legion Outpost #6. A generally good job.

Mike Reban's "Speculations" were interesting, but only speculation. When I was editing (and sometimes writing) Legion scripts, it never occurred to me that Earth's world government could have originated in this century. I still feel there are too many differences among the various peoples for such a government to succeed in the immediate future.

Of course, the Legion lives in one of several possible futures. Another is the one in which Iris West was born. The sci-fi theory behind this is that all these worlds of the future are valid, but only one will be the actual future, while the others will exist as parallel worlds.

I see Roger Slifer liked the Wonder Woman movie. Most of us at DC thought it was a bomb—too much like a rehash of The Girl from U.N.C.L.E.! Yet apparently quite a few fans liked it. Personally, I prefer the new version in the Schwartz-edited mag.

Murray tells me a lot of readers have requested reprints of Ferro Lad stories. As it happens, he's in the Legion reprint in the next Superboy/Legion 100-pager. But then, so is everybody else who was in the Legion at the time—plus the Subs, the Pets (minus Protv II) and Mxyzptlk. It fixed things up for a lot of the Legionnaires and introduced the White Witch. Mort and I sort of plotted as we went. In Part 1, we wrote Superboy and Supergirl out of the Legion and intended to leave them out for two years. Then, when the time came for a sequel, we had orders from the bosses to get Superboy back. Changing the color of the kryptonite surrounding Earth from green to blue was a bit far-out, but it was the only solution we could come up with, since we'd established that even Element Lad couldn't do the job. Anyway, it's still a story I recall with fondness. I even introduced R.J. Brande in it, and established that he has an estate which is an entire small planet!

Since we have two Specs a year, why not write and tell me which Legion tales you'd like to see reprinted?

Best,
E. NELSON BRIDWELL
75 Rockefeller Plaza
New York NY 10019
May 21, 1974

* * *

Thank you for the copy of Outpost #6. Glancing through the issue, I became aware that you guys are getting better and better at what you do. DC seems to be really getting behind you what with the stats that they are providing, etc. I enjoyed reading and got a chuckle out of the article on the British hardcovers. They are really bad—dreadfully melodramatic in all respects. The artists seem to be making up the heroes from time to time, they look so different from the American versions. About the only Batman worse than the one presented in the annuals is the one that appeared in the Big Little Book a couple of years back.

I should also mention with respect to Mike Flynn's "My-place" that I disagree totally. I have yet to vote in one of the Comic Fan Award ballots. The whole idea is quite ridiculous—Roy Thomas, best editor! Roy Thomas has produced so much material at Marvel that there is bound to be some good stuff laced in with the crap. Someone like Joe Orlando, if you know anything about comics, Joe Kubert or Archie Goodwin would have made sense. An editor is supposed to get the best

out of his people—his writers, his artists, his letterers, everybody! Orlando does this with his magazines as do the others. People are quitting Marvel every day either because they can't take Roy Thomas or because of the sheer insanity of Marvel's way of working. To give a fan the opportunity to vote for best professional is all right, but when the fans on the outer fringes, who just like the Legion—or Wonder Woman—or Casper—are given the right to vote and nominate, it nullifies the whole idea of the voting; it doesn't tell you anything about how good or bad the winner is, because the fans aren't qualified to judge.

The Shazams are another story. That's the people inside the industry voting for the people inside the industry, so it is somewhat valid...the whole idea of voting in an awards ballot that means nothing to anybody, to me, seems rather foolish.

Mort Weisinger puts me away. Every time that guy writes a letter, he sticks his typewriter in his mouth. To hear him tell the story, DC was a vast wasteland of nothing until he came along. He keeps trying to get people interested in the Bizarros, since it was one of the few things he ever created. It's taken people like Len Wein and Denny O'Neil a number of years to undo all the damage he inflicted on the Superman comics (which, unfortunately, includes the Legion of Super-Heroes) line. You'd be hard pressed to find any artist or writer with anything nice to say about Weisinger and the way he handled the Superman line.

The man always deluded himself into thinking he could draw and tried to tell the artists how to. It was people like Weisinger who kept the comic book medium as stagnant and repulsive as they could—"Anything for a buck." It is only with people like Kubert and Infantino in editorial positions that comic books made any advancement at all. With guys like Weisinger, you would never have seen The Shadow, Swamp Thing, Famous First Edition, Berni Wrightson, Jeff Jones, Mike Kaluta or anyone else at DC. I think anyone reading anything he writes should take it with a rather large granule of sodium chloride.

All in all, I think you've whipped The Legion Outpost into a very viable showplace of thoughts and ideas on the comic book medium. I particularly enjoyed the article regarding the K.A.L.-E.L. Society. The idea that alien life will look just like human beings, or even that they will share even vague qualities with us is a chauvinistic attitude long dismissed by most scientific science-fiction writers. As usual, however, comic books lag far behind even the most primitive of today's science-fiction.

Best regards,
DAVE SIM
282 Westmount Road, East
Kitchener, Ontario
May, 1974

(Dave is editor of Now & Then Times and a regular contributor to Comic Art News and Reviews, both excellent Canadian fan publications.)

Question: Is Jim Shooter the exception that proves the rule? He has some nice things to say about Mort Weisinger...

Before we brace ourselves for a few sour buttermilk reactions to Outpost #7—The Legion Outhouse—a few items of miscellany... —MF)

* * *

It has been less than two weeks since your subscribers received Outpost #6 containing my first published announcement concerning The Comics Heroines Fan Club, but already I am receiving letters of interest from fans all over the country! It is still too early to predict just how extensive and active an organization the CHFC may become, but I think it is not too early to say that I seem to be on the right track in believing that there are enough enthusiastic comics-heroines fans to form the nucleus of a very meaningful new club. I know you will be pleased to hear this since you have previously expressed your own interest in seeing such a fan club established.

I am getting letters not only from readers interested in the CHFC concept and in becoming members, but also from writers and artists who are enthusiastic about contributing to a CHFC fanzine. (Needless to say, I hope that all of these "charter members" will recruit their fan-friends to swell the ranks.) A full-scale offset publication, comparable in quali-



ty if not in content to The Legion Outpost, should of course be an ultimate goal of the CHFC.

I may be overly optimistic, but I honestly have a feeling that the horizons of the CHFC are potentially unlimited. I see the club as serving two basic purposes, each of them with many ramifications. First, it can be a means for its members to share their mutual enthusiasms, through an appropriate fanzine and through personal correspondence, and to exert a purposeful, organized influence on comics editors and publishers, television producers and networks, etc. on behalf of all comics-heroines fans. Secondly, it can provide an exciting forum for the exchanging and debating of individual viewpoints among its members. The club itself will take no official stand where debatable issues (super-powers, art styles, characterizations, costumes, etc.) are concerned; but will in fact encourage its members to debate these issues to their hearts' content.

Within this general framework of purpose, we will do many specific things which will surely involve and delight all fans of the comics heroines. We'll conduct membership polls and bestow appropriate CHFC awards. (I can see the annual "Outstanding Costume Award" being a hotly-debated issue.) We'll produce comics-heroines posters based upon original artwork and perhaps also on live photography with actual creation of comics-heroines-style costumes. (I'll stop here because frankly I don't have time now to go further with a listing of the ideas which come to me regarding potential facets of the CHFC.) All in all, this could be a tremendously exciting and varied enterprise.

Thanks, Harry, for your all-important initial encouragement and cooperation. Thanks also for the example you have provided. I will be very proud if the CHFC can match you and The Legion Outpost in the essential elements of sincerity, integrity, dedication to standards of quality, and real concern for the personal interests of its members. That is certainly the kind of goal I have in mind.

Sincerely,
ALBERT TANNER
Box 10956
Baltimore MD 21234
May 30, 1974

(Thanks for the kind words, Al—we're always glad to help, especially when it involves a club with as much promise as the CHFC. Those who haven't joined yet and are interested in the super-femmes should get their rears in gear and write Al. Deluge him. The least you can do is make him shell out the extra scratch to rent a bigger post office box... —MF)

* * *

Dear Harry,

Don't you hate these anonymous letters? Don't throw the letter away, anyhow! There's two bucks you can grab! Not only that, but there's a few stamps for postage! Not only that, but I'll be sending you \$2.00 and three stamps every month! That means 24 bucks and 36 stamps from me every year!

And not only that, but every $\frac{1}{4}$ year I'll give you three bucks! And four stamps!

So that means you get \$28.00 in cash per year from me, and \$4.00 worth of stamps per year, giving you a grand total of \$32.00!

Don't get a headache trying to guess who I really am. You've heard of me once or twice, though, in my real name.

Yours:
THE AARDVARK
California 952??
June, 1974

(And sure enough, Harry reports that \$2.00 in hard cash and three 10¢ stamps were enclosed with the letter. But that was in June, and Aardy didn't come through in July and August. Tightwad! And we were planning to use the money to pay off the Outpost's debt, go to four-color printing and real honest-to-wow typeset copy, and push our frequency up to weekly. Just can't trust some people to keep their word!...

Okay, it's Outhouse time now. We'll break you in slowly with one of the more favorable letters... —MF)

* * *

THE LEGION OUTHOUSE was beyond belief...I especially enjoyed Herman C.'s article on the LEGIN (I love capitals, but I don't spell so good) in 1984. Wow! is all I can say. I missed X-Men #215 and I was really in the dark as to who ate Philadelphia until I read your column. Thanks for clearing it up!

This brings me to another point of interest to LEGIN (Wow! CAPITALS!!) fans: Do you think if we send letters to Carmine Instanttea—that's really A FUNNY NAME!!—we could



No. 17 in a
Series of 12

**The LEGION of
SUPER-PERVERS**



Best wishes
and all
my love!
Targat Lal
XXX

Next month: Lesby Girl

Decker

get PHANTOM-CACTUS GIRL a magazine of her own??? Now, there's a heroine with a problem I can really relate to. (I'm having the operation next week.) What I also want to know is, what kind of a crack is, "It sucks the mop"??? I thought your magazine was clean and decent and respectable and all that ~~shit~~ gunk, and then you go and print something like "It sucks the mop." I am shocked! I mean, it was a direct quote and all, but printing "It sucks the mop" (oops! I said it again) is really uncalled for. Not to mention tasteless.

Now that I have that off my chest, do you know where I can get a copy of Weird Sex in the Thirtieth Century??? I don't think they sell it in Evanston. Probably that damned Women's Christian Temperance Union.

I think DWIGHT DECKER has a nifty last name, you know what I mean? It has real class. Now, for you, Margie Spears (you're not even going to get capital letters! Hah!), I think Phantom Girl could use a new costume, even if it does have a pendant that could knock her face in (see illustration). After all, being a LEGINNAIRE, Phantom Girl—I mean, PHANTOM GIRL—has been knocked up plenty of times, I didn't mean to say that. Anyhow, even a pendant would be better than those



flared 1972 Levi's she's wearing now. I mean, that costume really sucks the mop!

Well, the tea kettle is whistling, so I've got to toddle on. Waiting to see this in your magazine (I dare you to print this!) I remain...

PAUL DECKER
On the lam in Evanston IL
July, 1974

P.S. I think the MYSTERY LEGIONNAIRE is DUO DISMAL. Do I win? (Wrong! You lose! (Hah!)) It was Ear-Fall-Off Floyd, who used to be naught but a stray impulse in Frank Maynerd's garbonza! Frank took the \$1,000,000 Fortress of Solitude as his prize and plans to convert it into a Kentucky Fried Chicken store; meanwhile, we're helping him grab Tony DeFranco so the li'l runt can stand watch over the kettles of steaming grease... to make sure stray cockroaches—and worms, even—don't fall

in to adulterate all that pure Wesson Oil.

Y'know, it takeschutzpah to dare us to print a letter. But since you're a friend of Harry's, I guess we have to. I hope your mother sees this and washes your dirty little mouth out with Ajax. I'm sending her a copy to make sure she does!

And now, our moment of shame... —MF)

* * *

How could you do it?

The Outhouse had all the makings of a good satire. The art was good, the humor was good.

Harry, if you have a Bible near, pick it up and read Exodus 20:7. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." I just pray the Lord will forgive you.

As for the rest of the book, it was the funniest thing I've seen since Paul "Bear" Bryant's face after the Auburn-Alabama game of '72. Mercy, baby, one of these days you're gonna rival Sam Glanzman in my book.

Are you sure that's what Zilber looks like, on page 2? I dunno, but it looks almost human. (I think it looks pretty good/ Shut up, Ygor/) Would you mind explaining to me and other interested parties, such as my pet vulture, Ygor, what exactly is a Jay Zilber, and if the rumor about him being related to Howard Cosell and Cleveland Amory is true?

By the way, I doubt if Swamp Thing could ever defeat Dancing Bear.

May the LSH live long and prosper,
G. PAYNE
1924 Cherry Avenue
Birmingham AL 35214
July 17, 1974

* * *

Having read The Legion Outhouse for the second time, I have decided that you, et al, should be both reprimanded and praised. Praise includes the concept of "The Legion: 1984" for Harry (not for how the concept developed; more on that later), the concept and execution of "Off the Record" for Jay, "Rx Factor" for Margie (this was the best part of Outpost #7), and "The Unconquincible Ironical Man Meets the Fwenetic Fewwo Lad" for Mercy and Harry (this was the next best part of #7).

Now for the reprimands. Get ready! Here they come!! I am reprimanding Jay personally for allowing much of "The Legion: 1984" and "The Brojium Trail" to see print. First, "1984." Harry, you listen too! You sure must be starved for sex (in other words, very abnormal in that respect) for printing such things as: "Bite My Nuts and You'll Follow Me Anywhere"... "Legionnaires...ravished the seven-legged mutant son of Mary Tyler Moore"... "Nestea McOrgasm"... "chihuahua in heat"... "Chemical King got pregnant (hasn't your father talked to you yet? I have a feeling it's too late)...and blamed Cosmic Boy"... Another reference to MTM's son (GET OFF OF THAT)... "It's Alive...and It Sucks"... "the succeeding pages related her attempts to wean him"... Everything listed under Weird Sex (I FEEL SO SORRY FOR YOU) in the Thirtieth Century.

Even though I praised Jay for "Off the Record," one glaring stupidity arises: Weird Romance (YOU POOR GUY).

Last, and certainly least, "The Brojium Trail." Get Mike to listen. It did not work as "The Ytterbium Trail" so logically it failed even more miserably. Mike, you are just as bad off as Jay and Harry (I PITY YOU). Princess Projectra & Ultra Boy...Phantom Girl & Ultra Boy...Obscenities have no place in the Outpost!!

In regards to Jesus Christ, I hope you realize what the second name means. It means that Jesus is the Messiah who came to Earth in order to die for us (everyone) in order to account for our thoroughly sinful nature and actions. Once Jesus rose from the dead, all of our sins were forgiven. We, by our own works, cannot enter Heaven. The Holy Spirit must enter us and allow Jesus in. Then we repent of all of our sins (past, present and future) because we then want to. Every reprimand I've listed and countless others are SINS on your part. I am a sinner, too; the worst. Once a sinner always a sinner (similar to alcoholics). However, the Holy Spirit has entered me and Jesus Christ lives within my heart. I know that I have eternal life, now!! Not just in the future but NOW!!! I am going to heaven. I hope to see you there. I

will pray that Christ enters your heart as He has mine. God be with you.

LLL!

Maranatha,
RICK FOSTER
6801 Locust Street
Commerce City CO 80022
August 7, 1974

(Serious answer time. First, in re G. Payne's contention that we took God's name in vain in the Outhouse: We found three items which we assume G. was referring to—"Jesus Christ Super-Stars" as the corporate symbol on page 5, and "Jesus Christ, Super-Legionfan" and "Super-Jesus...Legionnaire!" on page 13. And we have to confess we don't see anything offensive about any of them. In case anyone missed a screamingly obvious fact about Outpost #7, let us say it here: It was satire. Satire of today's comics, of trends in today's comics, and, in a way, of society in general.

Now, we can see nothing derogatory to Christ in any of the references. Keep in mind that Christian tradition holds that Jesus Christ was God and man, with all the attributes of both. Surely one human attribute is a sense of humor—and if Jesus can't laugh along with us over a couple of jokes, then something's wrong somewhere.

As for Rick Foster's comments, we have no desire to get wrapped up in a hard-core theological argument; in this case, though, Rick seems more concerned about the sexual references in the Outhouse than about anything else. Our view is that sex can be sacred or funny or sad, but it certainly can't be shoved under the rug. We don't claim that we—myself, Harry and Jay—are exactly normal in any respect; who is? But sex-starved maniacs we aren't. There's humor in everything if you know where to look...and we can't help but wonder why you, Rick, went back and read everything twice, and then recopied all the "offending" passages in your letter.

We're glad you're going to Heaven, and we hope to meet you there, too. In the meantime, flip to Luke 18:9-14 and re-think what you said in the last few sentences of your letter, Rick.

And now, on a lighter note... —MF)

* * *

Some general thoughts on Outpost #6:

I give you credit for already trying for as much Cockrum art as you can finagle. But if he wants you to pay him for it, politely decline without offending him.

Yes, yes, yes! department; or "Let's have more":

Matsumoto

Marty Pasko, if possible (but I doubt it)

Mercy's wash of Mon-EI, really great!

Zilber (don't ask me why, but I like his column)

Roger Slifer's column left me rather cold. Who he? Who care? Even the title is dumb and contrived. I've been sort of slipping away from the mainstream of fandom, so excuse my ig-



norance. But unless he's a Name you'd like to keep connected with the Outpost, I'd suggest you tell him to stop rambling and get to the point, any point.

Where were the reviews? If you're going to cut out the fiction, at least leave in the good non-fic stuff.

I hope you realize that Harry's "Outside Looking In" and possibly even Mike's "Ytterbium Trail" were much, much better than the British reprint story.

I had to laugh reading the letter from Mort Weisinger. He sounds like one of his '60s fans that appeared in the original Legion Outpost.

Speaking of that letters page, I ran across an old letter in Adventure #341. I quote it in its entirety:

Dear Editor: In The Legion Outpost (Adventure No. 335) there is a letter suggesting you put a super-rabbit in the Legion of Super-Pets. There is a super-rabbit already! He appeared in a Lois Lane-Lana Lang story, "The Girl Atlas." This bunny has super-strength and invulnerability. He could even travel great distances by means of super-hops!
Ron Ziegler, Oregon City, Ore.

HA!

I'd say that statement was inoperative, wouldn't you?

In the big "cuss word controversy," I'll have to side with Dale Hoose. In the framework of a fiction story, it would be wrong to leave it out when a characterization calls for it. I figure George Carlin's Deadly Seven should be the ones to avoid, if you're looking for some sort of guideline. (George's Seven are shit, piss, fuck, cock, cunt, motherfucker and tits, in case you hadn't heard.)

Things are getting a little hazy. Things have a tendency to go hazy at 1:47 four days before graduation. Unless anyone has anything else he or she wants to add, I move we adjourn the letter.

Mr. Chairman?

...Binder

acter whose name I forget / Gabby Hayes, most probably—ML/. His true talent lies in his paintings, engravings, sculptures, and his own unique three-D billboards strewn all over the Lake George country up here. He's a fine artist at heart.

Marc Swayze I didn't know very well. He could both write and draw. I know Rod Reed was his pal and swore by his work so it must have been good.

OUTPOST: As a movie and comics fan, I know Hollywood had a "blacklist" during the "Red Scare" of the '50s. And comics had a scandal of their own—the Wertham book and Senator Estes Kefauver's hearings. But what I'm trying to make a point of is this: Do you believe in censorship? And do you think such companies as EC should have been able to keep publishing their mags?

BINDER: I am totally against any and all forms of censorship in the arts. We all thought Wertham was a big fart who was merely capitalizing on his books, knowing that any anti-comics work would be enthusiastically bought by mothers who thought comics were warping their kids. Nobody has proven that lurid comics or sexy books or even porno material has ever changed a person, unless he was

...Update

back cover by Jim Jones, a lengthy dialogue between the two, articles on Archie Goodwin and coverless comics, AND—are you ready for this?—a genuine Zilber "Update"! All this and more for only 50 cents....or, if you prefer, \$2.00 for four issues. Future issues will contain articles by such greats as Biljo, Mike Friedrich and Tom Fagan. So what are you waiting for?

Rich Morrissey
55 Claudette Circle
Framingham MA 01701

* * *

Jay again. I'd like to thank "Richie Rich" (as we call him) for doing this special guest Update, and I hope you enjoyed the change of pace from my..."crisp style"? Next is—

The chair recognizes Mr. MacDonald.

Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to urge that if Mr. Broertjes or Mr. Flynn receives any more letters from Gary Warren, that they print them. I've found them to be highly entertaining, Mr. Chairman, and I'm sure others do too.

Very well, Mr. MacDonald. Do you so move?

I so move, Mr. Chairman.

Any seconds?

I second the motion.

Very well. I move we put it to a vote. Any seconds?

I second.

Very well. All in favor say "Aye."

AYE!!!

All opposed say "Nay."

The motion is carried. The Outpost will continue to print letters from Gary Warren and any other Bible-belters that speak up, to be fair and to provide entertainment for other readers. Now can we adjourn the letter?

You betcherass, Mr. Chairman.

Goodnight,
DREW MACDONALD
117 DelMonte Court
Chesterfield MO 63017

(To quote Harry from Outpost #1, "Correspondence (...subscriptions, threatening letters, federal grants, etc.) should be sent to Mike Flynn, 1354 Herschell St., Bronx NY 10461." Plenty 'nuff said, so thank you, good afternoon, and remember: Yesterday was the last day of most of your life so far.
—MIKE FLYNN)

already unstable to begin with. I too thought EC horror comics were great and wrote a modest number of them... yes, some actual shockers of that ilk, where I could let my imagination into uninhibited horror and sci-fi. Fun writing them. At every story confab, Bill Gaines would be in on it and every once in a while, when we were stalled, he'd whip his arm around and say, "Give 'em the chain!" He acted bloodthirsty but was actually the opposite—very generous in paying his staff and freelancers, for instance. The only reason I regretted that EC went on with the horror comics was because of the gathering storm I knew was being cooked up by Wertham and his cohorts. I didn't want them to get a toe-hold against banning comics, which of course happened after the Congressional investigation—that is, with the comics thereafter emasculated to the point of being insipid. Someday, the EC stuff may be called the only true literature that ever came out of the comics medium.

* * *

NEXT: Rod reed was an editor in the Fawcett comic line during the mid-World War II years, and later gave up his job to become editor of Down Beat—but all the while writing many of the best Captain Marvel stories ever produced. The man whom Kurt Schaffenberger regards as having a "DeMille complex," Reed will be interviewed in the next segment of this series.

sue I'll be back with my endless volley of thoroughly biased, one-sided nonsense, and there'll be some rather pleasant changes in Update's format for you to thrill to.

Two brief notes before closing: (1) Update now is appearing regularly in that fine Canadian zine, The Journal... but maybe you'll want to subscribe to it anyway. It's 15 cents a copy of \$2.00 for a year's sub from Paul Kowliuk, c/o The Journal, Box 1286, Essex, Ontario.

And (2) I'm at a bran' spankin' new address now; I'm presently learning how to be a well-educated cab driver at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. So take note: the new address is...
Jay L. Zilber
Oberlin College Mail Room, No. 2863
Oberlin OH 44074

And now, this closing word... *SLAM*!!!

JLZ

Cockruiii 14



LEGION Bulletin TOPPOST

No. 8 - Summer, 1974

For the Record

By HARRY BROERTJES

National has increased the frequency of The Legion from bi-monthly to eight-times-a-year, as of issue #206. This is part of DC's latest expansion, and several other bi-monthlies soon will be coming out more often as well.

To name a few, Justice League of America is reported to be going monthly, The Flash to eight-times-a-year and Swamp Thing to seven-times-a-year.

The DC expansion includes the introduction of a number of new books. The Shadow, which teetered on the brink of cancellation when artist Frank Robbins left for Marvel, is back on the schedule under editor Denny O'Neil. Denny also will edit three brand new color books: Kung Fu, based on the television show; The Avenger, from the pulp series, and an adaptation—believe it or not—of Beowulf.

Joe Orlando will be editing The Sandman's new book (presumably, his first issue will be #2), with Mike Fleisher writing and art said to be by Ernie Chua and Mike Royer. Orlando also is said to be editing a new mystery book, called Secrets of the Haunted House.

A revival of the long-lost Showcase, to be titled either First Issue or First Edition, will feature Jack Kirby's Atlas, Joe Simon's Green Team and a new Metamorpho story in its early issues. The Metamorpho story, which is nearing completion already, was written by Bob Haney and drawn by Ramona Fradon.

* * *

Murray Boltinoff confirms that Cary Bates and Mike Grell will continue producing The Legion at its new frequency. It may be pointless to say this, but both stories in The Legion #206 (right) are by Cary and Mike.

Cary, by the way, didn't stay out west very long. He's back east now, and has sold his treatment of the upcoming James Bond flick. Which is to say that his treatment will be considered along with others that were bought, and if his is selected as the basis of the film, he probably will co-author the screenplay.

As for Mike, The Comic Reader has reported that he will "tentatively" be doing some work for Seaboard. We couldn't reach Mike for his confirmation, but we understand Mike has at least discussed the possibility with the Seaboard people.

* * *

Meanwhile, now that Roy Thomas has resigned as Marvel editor, with Len Wein taking over the color books, it seems doubtful that Len will complete the multi-part Batman-Talia series he began for Julie Schwartz in Detective. With Man-hunter dead now, the book's back-up slot will be filled by alternating Elongated Man and Robin stories. Mike Barr has written the first Ralphie story and Bob Rozakis will be doing the Dickie stories.

In any event, the change-over at Marvel means that some of the artist-writer shuffles—definite and otherwise—that

we mentioned last issue probably won't come about as planned.

Roy will continue writing all the Conan stories in the eloquent barbarian's three books, and even if he's not credited as being editor of them, he nevertheless will have free rein with the series.

The X-Men are said to be back in the first-run business again, with new stories by Len and Dave Cockrum planned.

Marvel's preparing a new \$1.00 color super-hero team-up



book, with Spider-Man and the Thing, Cadence' two strongest characters, reportedly set to star in the first issue.

Iron Man is returning to monthly publication. (Can his heart take it??)

Scott Edelman has replaced Tony Isabella as editor of FOOM. Scott's leaving his post as editor of Marvel's British line, and is searching for someone to replace himself on that job.

The black-and-white revival of the old color Worlds Unknown will be titled Unknown Worlds of Science-Fiction. Gerry Conway probably will edit.

* * *

Over at Seaboard, the company's first new books are expected to be on the stands by late October or early November. Many of the top talents in the industry have signed on there, and just to give you an example of some of the improbable team-ups that have resulted, dig this: at least one story was

written by Archie Goodwin, penciled by Steve Ditko and inked by Wally Wood. Precious little information about the company's new books has been announced (or leaked) so far.

* * *

On a happy note: Magnificent Margie Spears, an Outpost stalwart who joined the Air Force a while back, will be getting married Sept. 21. The lucky man is Stephen Bratt, who's also in the Air Force.

Congratulations may be sent to Margie at PSC 2, Box 6286, Offutt AFB, Nebraska 68113.

* * *

Finally, our sincere thanks to G.C. Beck for providing the beautiful original illustrations for the Otto Binder interview this issue, and to Jim Shooter for making available the materials used to illustrate his own interview. Sorry if the latter didn't reproduce very well; they were shot from some rather faint pencils.

Jim, get back into comics! They need you! □

REVIEWS

Direct Currents

DIRECT CURRENTS (formerly THE DC BULLETIN), #2

Quarterly, offset, 8½x11, 16 pp
30¢ or four issues for \$1.00 from

Alan Orr
434 Manchester Rd.
Kitchener, Ontario
Canada N2B 1A5

In case you hadn't noticed, the fanzine market in recent months has been flooded with DC fanzines -- and Alan Orr's DIRECT CURRENTS is no exception. Produced in connection with Clint Thomas' Great DC Club, DIRECT CURRENTS is a valiant attempt to follow in THE LEGION OUTPOST's footsteps.

Following a comical Dave Sim cover and Alan's "Rose-coloured Glasses" editorial, comes an interview with Elliot Maggin as conducted by Daryl S. Herrick. Apparently this was Daryl's first attempt at conducting an interview -- and it shows. Questions like: "What's your opinion of Jack Kirby?" and "What do you think of Dick Giordano as an artist?" do not directly relate to the subject at hand -- specifically Elliot Maggin and his writings. Had it not been for Maggin's eagerness to answer, as well as the quality of his answers, the interview could well have been the low point of the issue. Next is a fiction piece by Clint Thomas entitled "Breaking Point." Starring the Grey Mouser (of SWORD OF SORCERY fame), the tale manages to capture a fair amount of Fritz Leiber's magic style, including Leiber's habit of not calling his heroes by name. Clint Thomas strikes again with his column "Shazam Circle" in which he examines how Aquaman met his wife Mera. A one-page "Secret Origin" of Black Canary follows with art by Ted DeLorme and text by Clint (again) Thomas. The highlight of the entire issue proves to be Dave Sim's "A Case for Relevance" in which he compares the methods of obtaining confessions by various super heroes. Sim apparently did his homework on criminal law before undertaking the task of writing this rebuttal to Jim Balko's anti-relevance article in issue one. Finally is Carol Strickland with "A Woman's Place" wherein she discusses 'The Supergirl Syndrome.' Most male chauvinist readers won't go along with her observations -- but it is worth reading.

If you happen to get off on fannish art, you'll be disappointed since the only piece of art besides Ted DeLorme's Black Canary is a Captain Marvel illo by Clint Thomas (he sure gets around, doesn't he?).

Despite the low spots, DIRECT CURRENTS is one of the better DC zines on the market, considering, of course, that it's seen only two issues. For DC fans (and Clint Thomas freaks), DIRECT CURRENTS is a real buy for only 30 cents.

Mike Valerio

The Monster Scene

THE MONSTER SCENE, #1

Bi-monthly, 12 pp, 30¢ from
David DeLorme
5 Lakewood Drive
Savannah, GA 31404

In the first issue of any fanzine there's always a margin for improvement -- and in some cases the margin's a bit wider than in others.

Actually, THE MONSTER SCENE isn't really that bad... There are merely a few things wrong with it that need to be corrected. In the first place TMS is clearly a labor of love, and in treating it as such editors David and Harry DeLorme may have lost some of their objectivity. The second problem is that, due to lack of contributions, the aforementioned DeLormes were forced to do everything in the zine themselves.

the contents include: "A Profile of Boris" (that's Karloff, folks); "Monster News Briefs"; an article on those rollicking robots of FilmLand, "The Metal Monsters"; plus features on Lon Chaney and son and humorous horror flicks.

I give the editors an "A" for effort and hope that future issues of THE MONSTER SCENE improve and prosper.

Mike Valerio

M Universe

M UNIVERSE, #1

Photo-offset, bi-monthly
8½x11, 16pp
6/\$1.50; 1 for 25¢ from
Joel Fischer
17030 NE 18th Ave.
N. Miami Beach, FL 33162

This is not all that bad a fanzine. It contains several well-written articles if your interests happen to lie in that field. Most are short, but somehow the zine comes out with no damage. Articles include "Tarzan --- Man-ape or Ape-man?", "Forever A Hero" about typecasting too well, as in the Kirk Alyn and George Reeves cases, "When SHAZAM Failed," and "The Science Fiction Form." For a quarter, it's hard to go wrong.

Mike Flynn

FANZINE EDITORS: The Outpost each issue will review as many fanzines as space permits. Review copies of your publication

may be sent to Carol A. Strickland, 832 Granville Towers East,

Chapel Hill NC 27514

LEGION EXTRA OUTPOST

No. 8 - Summer, 1974

SHOOTER'S BACK!...

...to write the Legion and Superman again after a five-year 'retirement'

Five years have gone by since Jim Shooter last wrote a comic story, but now he has returned to the business and will be writing new Legion and Superman stories for National editors Murray Boltinoff and Julie Schwartz.

Jim received the go-ahead from Boltinoff on Sept. 25 to develop three of the five Legion plots he'd submitted earlier into stories for the now-eight-times-a-year Legion book. At the same time he turned in eight Superman plot ideas to Schwartz.

The lead-time in the comics industry being as long as it is, it will be a number of months before any of Jim's new stories see print.

Jim will share the Legion job with Cary Bates for the time being. Right now Boltinoff's main concern is to enlarge his inventory of Legion stories in order to keep up with the book's increased frequency of publication.

Jim will work by mail from his native Pittsburgh and continue doing free-lance advertising work there as well.

Jim's return to comics had its beginning in May, when he was contacted by Outpost editor Harry Broertjes for the interview which appears in this issue. Jim had been almost completely out of touch with comics since he quit in 1969, and he admits the interview helped rekindle his old interest. Later on, when Harry and Jay Zilber were driving out to New York for Talok-1 (see The Poor Fan's Almanack) they visited Jim in Pittsburgh and

for more than three hours discussed the Legion, the Outpost, and comics in general.

This was followed on Sept. 7 by a phone call to Jim from Outpost-friend and Marvel staffer Duffy Vohland, who convinced Jim to come out to New York for a day or so to see what was going on at 75 Rockefeller Plaza and 575 Madison Avenue. Jim hopped a plane to New York the next day and received royal welcomes at the offices of both companies.

At National, Boltinoff and Schwartz asked Jim to come up with some plot ideas for the Legion and Superman, and later at Marvel, color books editor Len Wein offered Jim work there as well. For the time being, Jim has decided to stick with National.

And so, Jim returned to Pittsburgh to work out a package of plots. That done, he returned to New York on Sept. 23 to present them to Boltinoff and Schwartz...and the rest, for the time being, is history.

* * *

Why-editors-chew-their-fingernails dept.: By the time we learned of Jim's first trip to New York, the Outpost and the Bulletin were already at the printer. This being the case, we decided it would be easier to let both of them go through "as is" and then, as soon as possible, put together this Bulletin "Extra" giving the big news.

But this also meant moving back our mailing date until we could get the final details on what Jim will be writing. And so

we waited...and fortunately, the delay in mailing this issue will turn out to be only slightly more than a week.

Meanwhile, the extra time provided us a chance to update some of the news that appears in the Bulletin:

E.R. Cruz, with whom readers of DC's mystery books should be familiar, is said to be the new artist on The Shadow, replacing Frank Robbins.

We neglected to mention in the Bulletin that Jack Kirby's "Dingbats" will also be featured in an early issue of National's new First Issue book.

Len Wein definitely won't be completing the Batman-Talia serial in Detective. Word has it that Mike Fleisher might be the one to wrap it up, but there's nothing definite at the moment.

Pete Iro is Marvel's new British editor, replacing Scott Edelman.

NEW NEWS: National is considering coming out with a new barbarian/s&s book similar to Marvel's Conan.

Marvel's planned Iron Fist black-and-white has been shelved for the time being.

* * *

We may as well take this opportunity to apologize for the poor printing quality that showed up in spots in this issue of the Outpost. We ran into a number of unavoidable

hassles in the process of putting together our first wraparound issue—hassles which we'll know enough to sidestep next time around.

(By the way, the original of the photo that appears on page 2 wasn't exactly Grade A material, but somehow it turned out even worse in print. Our apologies. Gary Bates is in it, even if you can't see him—right behind Harry B. and next to Allan Asherman. What miracles hath Mr. Eastman wrought!)

Finally—and with red faces—we present a few free classifieds that we missed when we put together the Bulletin:

FOR SALE OR TRADE: Golden Key, Harvey, Charlton, and other comic books (not National or Marvel). Average price 10¢ a book. For selling list send SASE to W.G. Sales, c/o Daryl S. Herrick, Country Lane, Belchertown, Mass., 01007.

DESPERATELY WANTED!

Back issues of The Legion Outpost. I need issues #1, #2, #3, #4. Send lists, conditions, prices, to:

Joe Gulick
P.O. Box 4024
Lubbock, Texas 79409

Ain't the fanzine business wunnerful?[_

Thornsby



"I'm not living in the past! I'm a serious student of cultural change and historical trends!"

Thornsby



"Take what you need. Mister. But touch those 'Big Little Books' and I'll break your neck!"

Wonder Woman

WONDER WOMAN

Intro. by Gloria Steinem; essay by Phyllis Chesler
\$12.95

A Ms. Book pub. by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. and Warner Books, Inc.

Glancing at this book for the first time, I was extremely disappointed. It was approximately half the size of the Batman and Superman books, both of which cost only \$10. To make it worse, 25 of the 190 or so pages in the book were covered with rows and rows of print, probably dull. And to top it all off, the pages of artwork, instead of starting in the Golden Age and coming up to the "Diana Prince: Wonder Woman" (sigh!) stage, stayed back in the Golden Age. From the new WW magazine, supposedly a return to the glories of the Golden Age I had developed a violent distaste for the early Wonder Woman.

How wrong I was! This book is fantastically interesting from the very start. Gloria Steinem, an old-time WW fan, discusses the ideals behind the Amazing Amazon, and tells how the strip changed for the worse after the death of Wonder Woman's creator, psychologist William Moulton Marston. A quick, over-all view of the development of Amazonism rounds

out the introduction, leading into an essay by Phyllis Chesler, "The Amazon Legacy."

A description of this portion of the book would be impossible; it is packed with information I have never encountered before. Ms. Chesler talks about historical Amazon cultures from every point of view. Titles of the various sections give a rough idea of the text: "Amazons: the Universal Male Nightmare," "A Psycho-Historical Perspective," "Etymology," "The Legendary Amazons," "The Greek Amazon Myths," "The Historicity of the Greek Amazon Myths," "Matriarchal and Gynocratic Societies," "Queens," and "Woman Warriors." "Wonder Woman" compares the Amazon legend a la Wonder Woman to the culture of true Amazon communities.

The comic section consists of 13 stories, divided into four groups: origins, sisterhood, politics, and romance. Included are the very first WW story; how WW became Diana Prince; stories teaching women to be confident in themselves; lessons on democracy; male-female relationships (how many know Wonder Woman once said re her relationship to Steve Trevor, "Isn't it more fun to make the man obey?"); and of course around every bend are the much-disputed Holliday girls.

Summing up: A great book; heck, I'm even trying to get my mother to read it! I think you'd be much better off spending your money on this book than buying the slop Kanigher and Schwartz have been putting out lately.

Carol Strickland

OUTPOST CLASSIFIEDS

This is fandom's best advertising deal—because it doesn't cost you anything! Anyone and everyone is entitled to a free classified ad in this space. There's a limit of 8 lines, with 40 characters and spaces each—but if you absolutely MUST have more space to get your message across, send along 10¢ for each extra line. Send your free classified to Harry Broertjes, 728 Clark Street, Apt. 302,

Evanston IL 60201. A postcard will do.

ATTENTION: STAR TREK FANS!! Trost Enterprises can and will fulfill almost any orders for reproductions of my until-now private collection of ST tapes. Rates are \$4.25 @ live show, & \$2.15 @ animation. NY residents add 8% tax. All add 15¢ @ hour for post.&hand. Trost Enterprises Adam Mark 557 E. 83st. B'klyn N.Y. 11236	My minimum monthly order is 15 comics, but look at my prices, which include all postage costs. Save time and money. 20¢ comics--17¢; 25¢--20¢; 35¢--30¢ 50¢--40¢; 60¢--50¢. I carry all D.C., Marvel titles. Please order 2 weeks before release date. Mark Davis 8043 W. Thurston, Milwaukee, Wis. 53218	PAPERBACKS WANTED: <u>BLACKMARK</u> by Gil Kane, <u>THE UNTOUCHABLES</u> by Eliot Ness & Oscar Fraley, and Bantam <u>SHADOW</u> reprints by Maxwell Grant. COMICS WANTED: Green Lantern/Arrow 76, 79, 81. PLUS: Anything pertaining to STAR TREK or WARP. Mike Valerio, 105 Ledge Road, Seekonk, Mass. 02771. (I also want COMIXSCENE 2-8)
WANTED: <u>Dark Shadows</u> bubble gum cards #1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 50, 51, 52, 53, 57, 58, 59, 60, 62, 63, 64, 65, ... Jeff Thompson, 6807 Pennywell Drive, Nashville, Tennessee, 37205. Thank you!	WANTED: The Phantom Stranger #27, will pay 35¢ if in good condition. Plop #1 if in mint condition will pay 60¢. Swamp Thing #1 wanted, will pay same as for Plop. Horror, science-fiction, and fantasy fans also wanted. Write to David DeLorme, 5 Lakewood Drive, Savannah, Ga. 31404	AUCTION AUCTION AUCTION AUCTION AUCTION I am auctioning off the following items, Legion Comics #1, The Handbook of the Legion of Super-Heroes, and Legion Outposts 1-6. All items in VG condition. Will take best offer on all of the items as a group up to one month after this ad appears. Write: David Darr, 37 Johnson St., Rolla, Missouri 65401. Thanks!
Wanted: Any and all Legion stories, especially those in Adventure. Also, TLO issues #1, 2, & 3. Send lists to: C. Allen Grabert 170 Read St. Bridgeport, Ct. 06607	Neal Adams Any artwork by Adams wanted, except comics! Advertising, fanzines, etc. I'll buy or trade out of my large DC collection. Contact Mike Fasman: 69 Kingswood Rd., Auburndale, Mass. 02166 LLL	Duffy Vohland is WONDERFUL!!!! --An admirer
WANTED: SF digests like IF, Galaxy, Analog, etc. Gary Warren, 5526-35th, Lubbock, Texas 79407	WANTED--Inexpensive issues of Not Brand Echh and Adventure #340 to #358 still in reasonable condition. Also, be on the lookout for Luke Cage and Ghost Rider. Long Live the Legion. Mark Biscuso, 6549 Missouri Ave., Hammond, IN 46323	ATTENTION ALL TLO READERS! Anyone out there have TLO #1, 2, or 3 they would like to sell? I will pay 75¢ apiece (or other reasonable offer). My address is: Dick Schlesinger 806 St. Francis Dr. Broomall, Pa. 19008
Attention TLO Readers Wanted: Adventure Comics featuring the Legion and anything to do with Star Trek. Send list to: Steven Parker, Rt. 2 Box 65, Bakersville, N.C. 28705. Also wanted: A pen pal who likes the Legion and Star Trek. Support the Legion	Wanted: The Legion Outpost #1 and 2 and Bantam paperback Doc Savage #10, The Phantom City. Also wanted: Someone who can help me map out the Legion Headquarters Complex. Lance Curry, 401 East 19th Street, South Sioux City, Nebraska 68776	HELP: Wanted one pair of 3-D glasses, usable in a 3-D comic (3-D Batman). Anyone who can help me please drop me a line at this address: Jerry Cocchiola 598 Ridgewood Ave. B'klyn, N.Y. 11208



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